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PC Games for Life

July 2000

# incite™

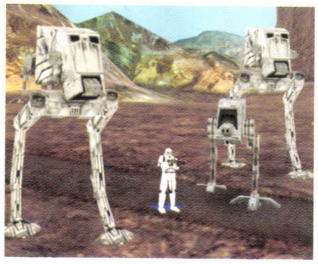
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FIRST LOOK! THE NEW V.I.P. GAME

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PLUS! New RENEGADE Info Revealed

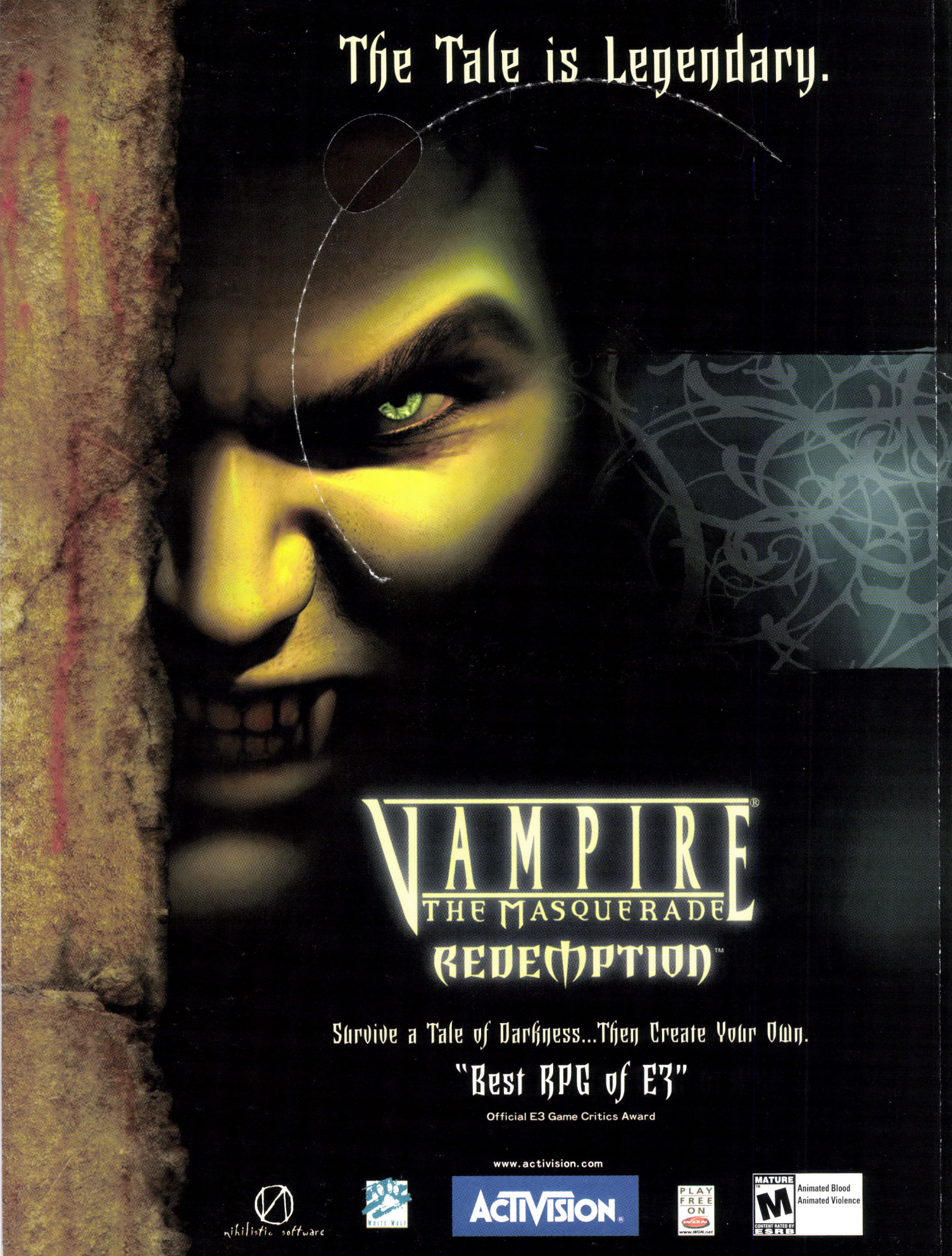




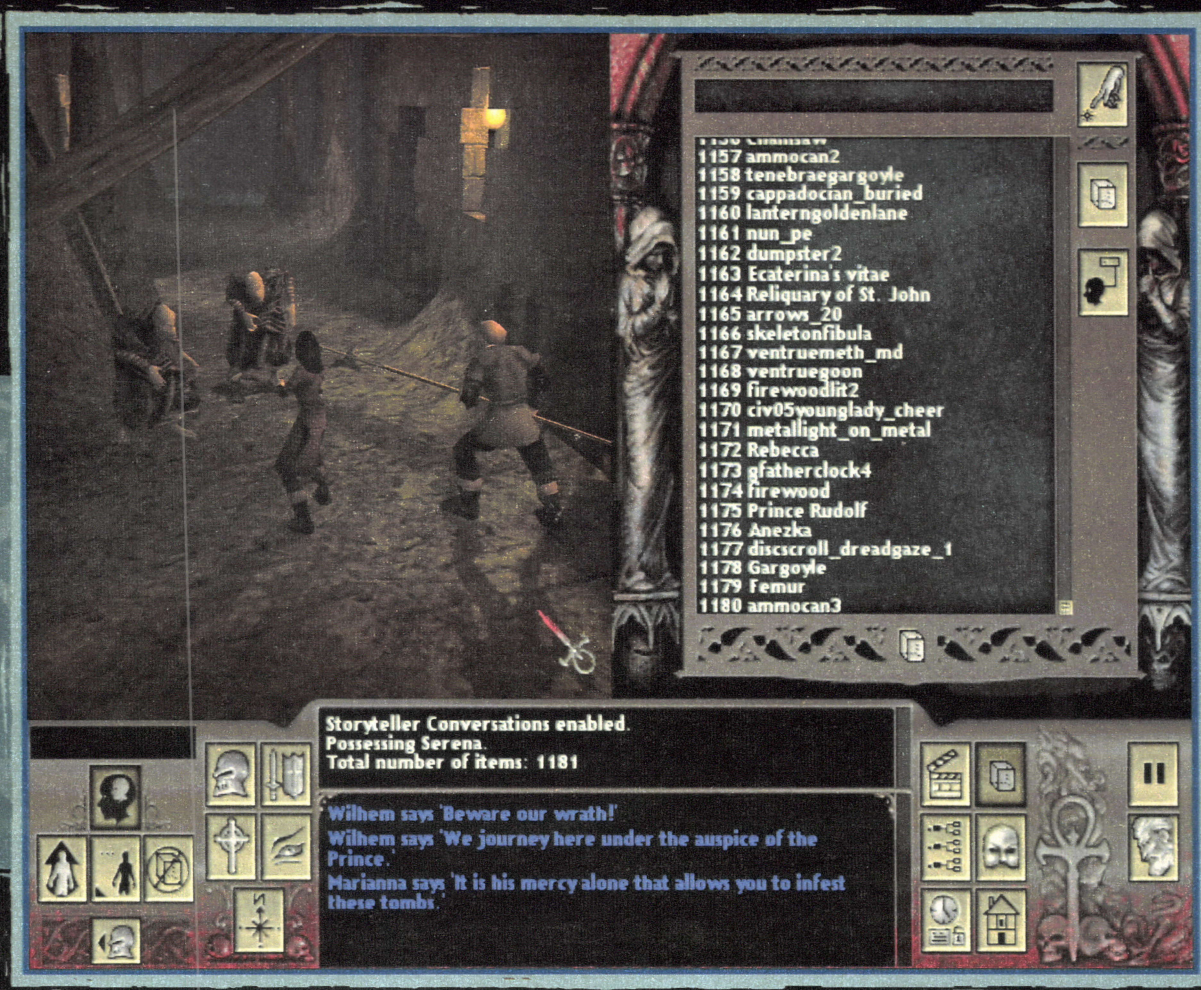


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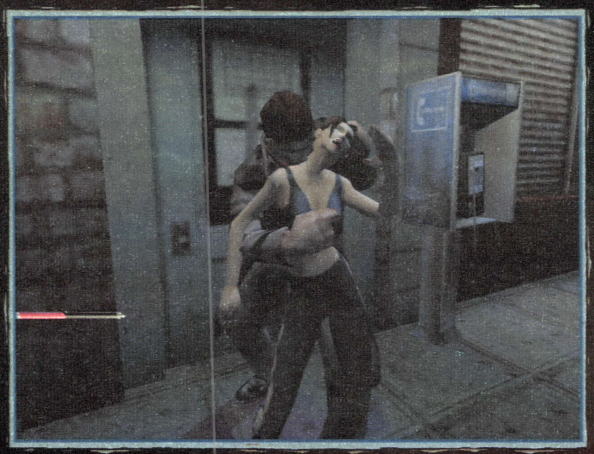
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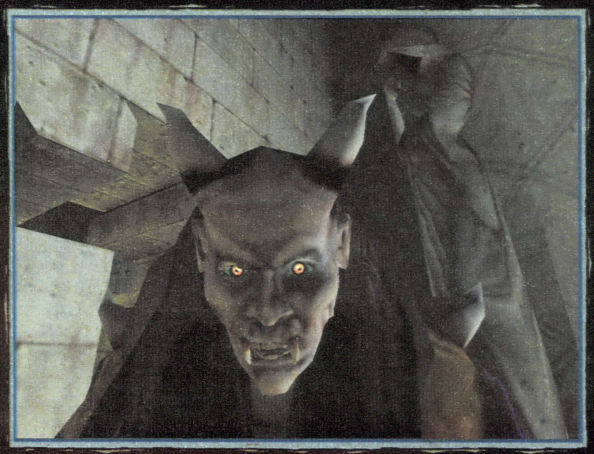
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# Live by the Sword;

## (Also pillage, plunder, hack, slash

The Rock Monster,
Yalta Desert
*"From stone to sand, by the force of my blade."*

# LEGEND OF THE BLADE MASTERS





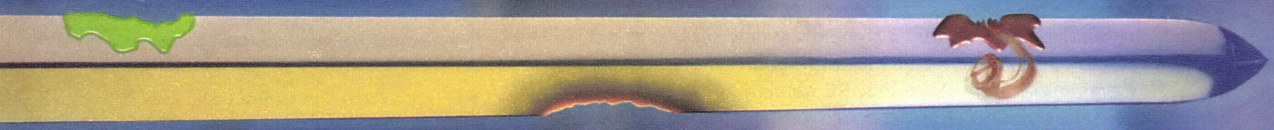


# Die by the Sword.

## and conquer by the sword.)

Trial of the Worms,
Wizard's Cave
*"Green is for the precious life that I take from thee."*

Date with Queen Arachnid,
Elven Forest
*"If only her exoskeleton was as tough as her will."*



Otanka Onslaught, Kelta
*"Fire in their bellies hath my strike released."*

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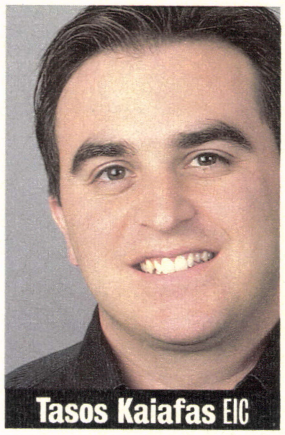
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# Team Talk

**Comments, suggestions?** Send any feedback to ipcqletters@incite.com
fax: 415 865 5201

PC gaming had better live on, dammit, because there's no way you'll catch me playing *Space Channel Five.*


Tasos Kaiafas EIC

There's been a lot of talk lately about how the new console game systems are going to kill off PC gaming. I'm really getting sick of it. The way I see it, the only way PC gaming will die is if the home PC goes first, and that's not going to happen anytime soon, so shut up!

Like some of you, I too might be tempted to buy a PlayStation 2 or an X-Box to play certain kinds of games, such as sports games, but I will never give up my PC. It's something that, for me, consoles can never replace, because PC gaming is a hobby that's not just about the games, but also about the latest technology. I get just as excited about upgrading my PC as I do playing the newest games on it. Console systems get old after a few months, and you have to buy a completely new system to get new technology. I simply can't wait that long.

However, make no mistake that PC gaming does need to improve if it's going to stick around. My biggest gripe, and it may be yours too, is the incompatibility of the hardware. There's nothing worse than getting all jazzed up about a new upgrade for your PC, only to find that your favorite games won't run on it unless you commit to a few frustrating hours' worth of tinkering. Most people, whose time is valuable to them, would probably go back to the store for a refund.

All the editors here are too passionate about PC gaming to give up hope. We want to see it get better – and fast. That's why we put together a list of 10 ways to save our favorite hobby. If the industry doesn't listen up, we all might have to suffer through games like *Um Jammer Lammy* on the PlayStation. See the story on page 68.

We might also see some great PC game developers succumb to financial difficulties, like Gathering of Developers, which had to sell its dream to Take-Two. Although The Gathering lives on, its early decision to make only PC games has come back to haunt it. Read about it on page 64.

PC gaming had better live on, dammit, because there's no way you'll catch me playing *Space Channel Five.* I already have a toddler at home who makes me watch *Sesame Street.*

## Meet the Editorial Team

### Joe Vallina



**Deputy EIC**

Joe says if there's a lesson to be learned by getting sick on deadline, it's that it pisses off your boss, who thinks you planned it. The fact that he did plan it is irrelevant.

### Gary Eng Walk



**Senior Editor**

Gary says he likes the Yankees, but then why has he been to more S.F. Giants games than anyone else on staff? We think he has a secret love for Barry Bonds' brand of homers.

### Darren Gladstone



**Senior Editor**

Darren's mad as hell, and he's not gonna take it anymore. Now if he could just figure out why, we'd be getting somewhere. Give him suggestions at dgladstone@incite.com

### Steve Klett



**Senior Editor**

One of Steve's favorite things to do is write a four-page, 1,000-word article and then have to cut it down to 150 words because his deputy EIC forgot to send him the layout plan. Doh!

### William O'Neal



**Senior Editor**

Wil, undaunted by the recent accident that ripped off his face and made him uglier than he already was, has now purchased a full-face helmet and is BMX racing again. What a maroon.

### Dave Rees



**Multimedia Editor**

Dave's Pittsburgh Penguins are making a run for the Stanley Cup, and he can think of little else, the *incite* CD be damned. Don't be surprised if the interface is yellow and black.

### Paul Semel



**Entertainment Editor**

Paul is gearing up for the annual Electronic Entertainment Expo (E3) in his home town of Los Angeles. Not the one in Los Angeles. Oh, wait, yes it is. Watch for our report coming up.

### Di Luo



**Editorial Assistant**

Di keeps promising to go back to college and make something of his life. We can't figure out how anything could be more rewarding than doing Test Centers.


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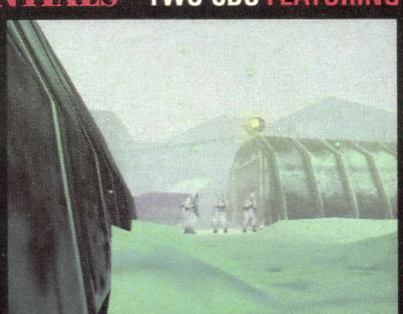
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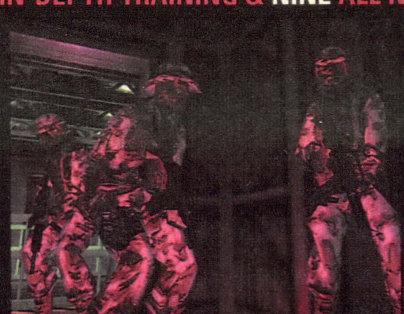
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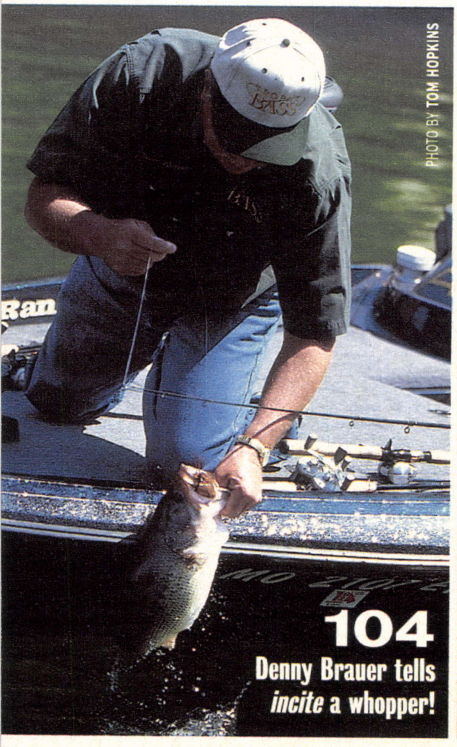


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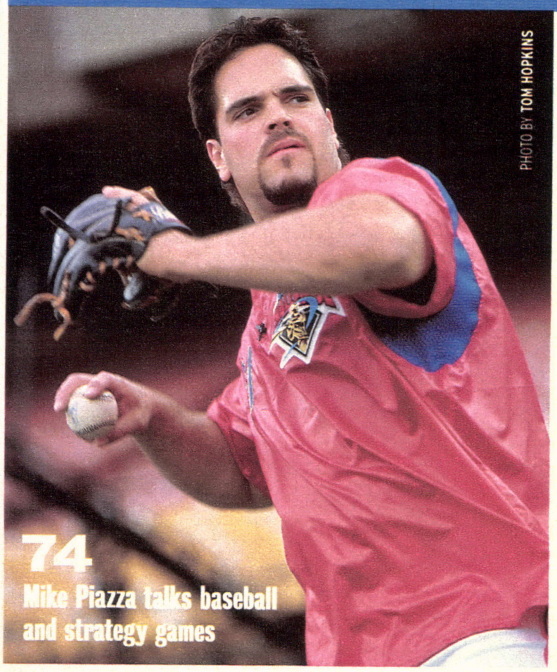


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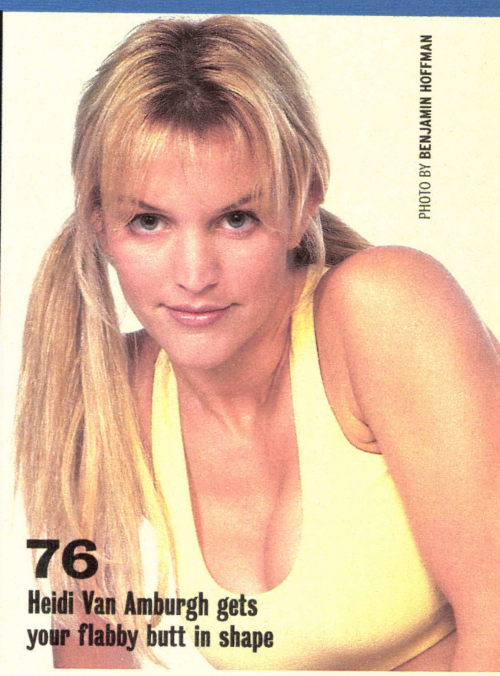


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**Heidi Van Amburgh gets your flabby butt in shape**

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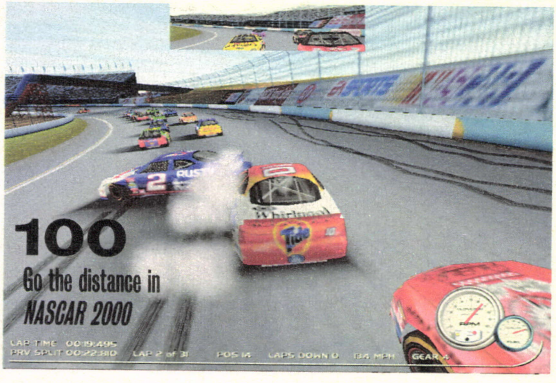
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Head into orbit in *Starlancer*



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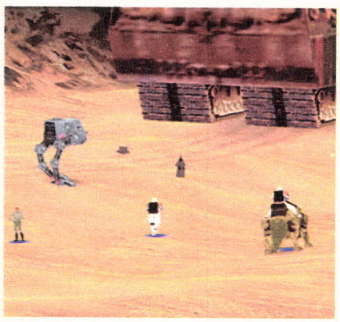
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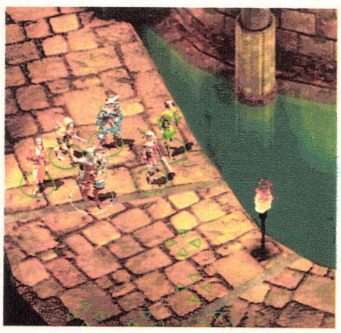
# ON THE incite CD-ROM

This *incite* CD-ROM is loaded with well over 600MB of hottest videos, game demos, and other goodies. Start at *inciteTV*, where you'll surely get a kick out of Electric Playground's hilarious interview with Will Wright, the creator of *The Sims*. Then head over to our Demos section and strap yourself in as you control an army of AT-STs in our *Star Wars: Force Commander* demo. And for a complete cheat and tweak guide for *Soldier of Fortune*, check out our Toolbox section.

To get the disc out of the cover, first peel back the access flap located on the inside of the front cover. Then carefully slide the disc out, and that's it.



**Force Commander**



**Icewind Dale**

## FREE GAMES

### Tribes — Free for Two Weeks!

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## VIDEOS

### Icewind Dale

Go behind the scenes with Chris Parker of Black Isle Studios.

### The Sims

Take a trip to your local cyberneighborhood with *The Sims* creator Will Wright.

### Alone in the Dark: The New Nightmare

This trailer shows why this game might be the creepiest to ever exist on your hard drive.



**Tribes — Full Game!**

## PLAYABLE DEMOS

### Force Commander

The *Star Wars* universe can now be experienced in the form of a rockin' 3D real-time-strategy game!

### NFS: Porsche Unleashed

Here's your ticket to drive the Porsche of your dreams.

### Beetle Buggin'

Cute but totally beefed up, these cars compete in a wide variety of events and tracks.

### Klingon Academy

You call yourself a Klingon? That honor comes to only those who have what it takes.

### Test Drive Le Mans

Think you can handle the toughest endurance race in the world? Find out with this demo.

## TOOLBOX

### Tweaks

Okay, gamers, we know you've been playing *Soldier of Fortune* to death. We hope it runs to your liking, but if it runs like molasses on your system, you can use our tweak to speed things up. We've also got a killer cheat guide. Plus, we brought back our classic *Unreal Tournament* and *Quake III Arena* tweak guides.

### Drivers, Patches, Gamespy

We have all the drivers and patches for the games you're playing now. Our massive *Thief II* patch will make your looting that much more stable. We also bring to you, once again, our exclusive version of 3DMark 2000 for your benchmarking pleasure.

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# Spill Yer Guts!

Got a burning question you need answered? Want a gaming matter cleared up once and for all? Need to vent some bile? We'll accept any and all of your thoughts. This, your letters forum, is the place to shout. Send all intelligent missives to **incite PC Gaming, 650 Townsend St., Suite 305, San Francisco, CA 94103 USA**. Alternatively, put finger to keyboard, and type to us via email at **letters@ipcg.com**.

## LETTERS FROM READERS

### X-Rated Baldur's Gate?

Apparently, *Baldur's Gate 2* is anatomically correct. Check out the big monster on the bottom right corner of page 18 of the June issue (the monster standing close to the red circle on the floor). He's hung like a horse!

**Chris Balibrera**
Via the Internet

### More Reviews!

When I looked at a recent issue of *incite PC Gaming*, I saw more previews than reviews. Why? I hope in future editions, there will be more reviews and previews in this mag. By the way, I don't care if you add a few cents to the magazine price. You know, people always want more and more – never enough.

**Sharul Azri**
Via the Internet

*The number of reviews versus previews in the magazine changes on a monthly basis. Sometimes there just aren't enough good games coming out for review at the time we publish. Other times, we're flush with reviews, and the preview well is dry. Take heart, Sharul, as the holiday season draws closer, you'll see more and more reviews.*



**BUCKING BRONCO** That's obviously his... uh... belt. Yeah, that's it, it's his belt.

which video card is best suited for the game. Good job!

**Justin**
Manitoba, Canada

### *incite* at the Front

I am currently stationed in Kosovo as part of Task Force Falcon. I would like to take a minute to say that your magazine is top-notch. I have waited a long time for a magazine such as yours. Thanks for the quality work. I subscribed after the first issue I read.

**Sgt. Todd Schimp**
Camp Bondsteel, Kosovo

### Kudos From up North

I would just like to start off by saying that this is truly the best magazine for video games out there on the market. Both the PC and the console versions are great. I would know this because I work at a video game store and I read all of the magazines and this is the only that is actually worth reading. *incite* is the only one that gives good reviews on all the games and actually tells

### Gospel Hour at *incite*

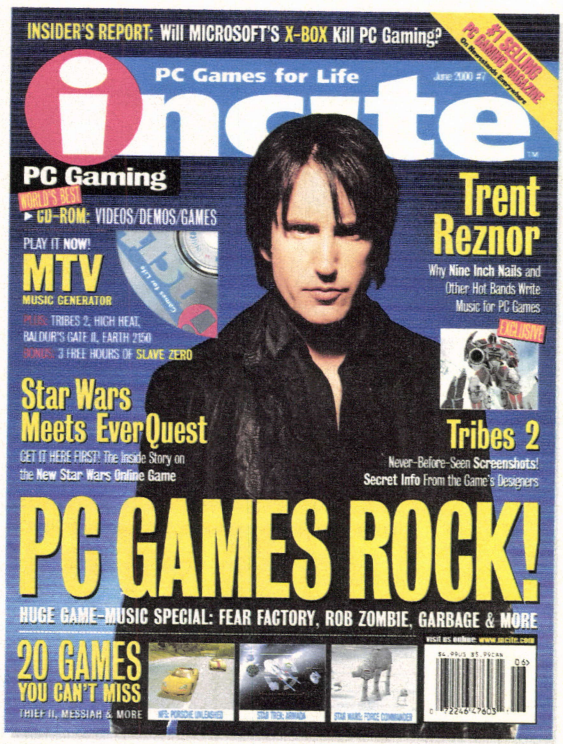
In one of the captions on page 83 of the June issue, the word "calvary" is used when "cavalry" is meant. The former refers to the place where Jesus died, not mounted horsemen.

**Ronald L. Nickelson**
Elizabeth City, NC

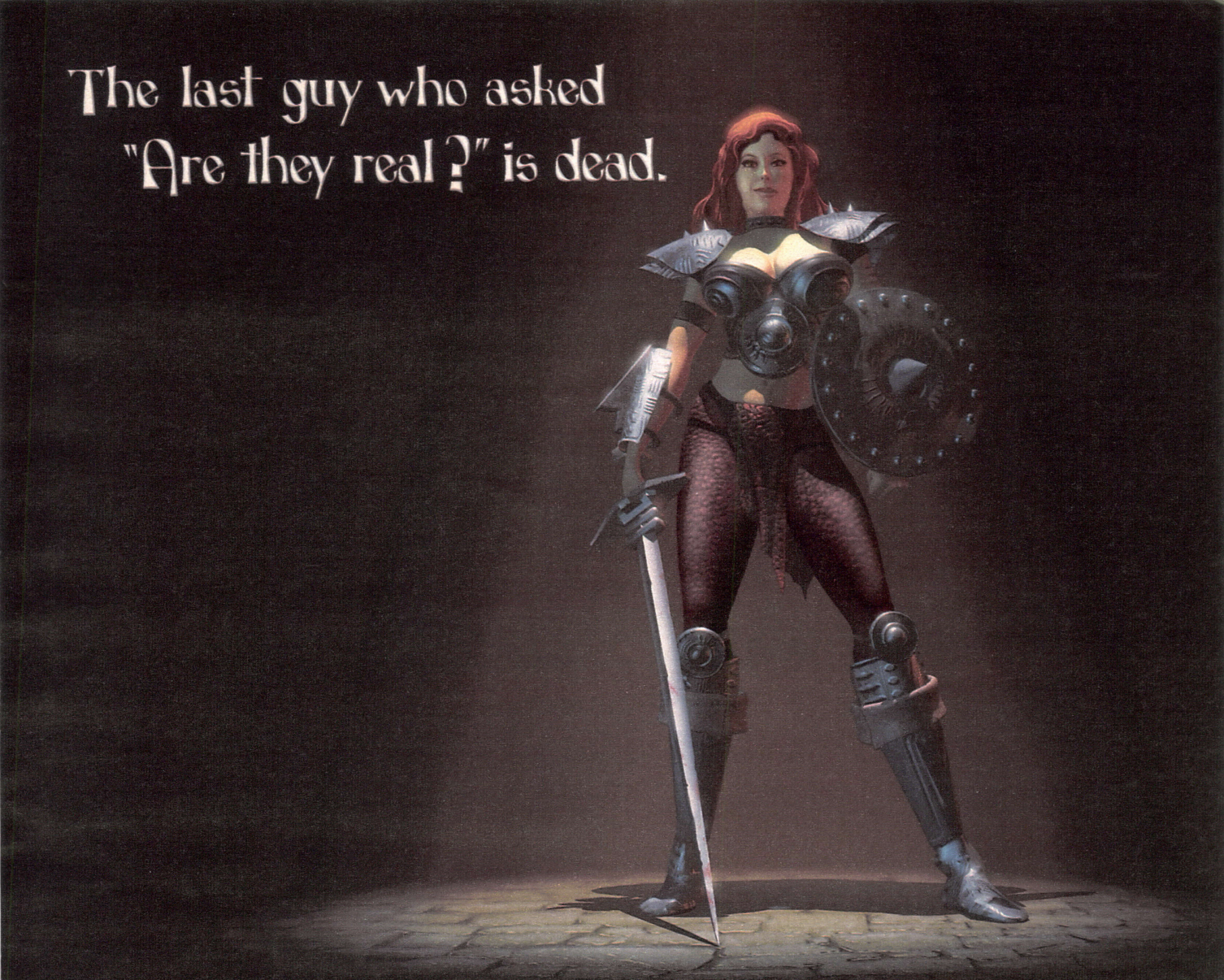
*We were obviously referring to the second coming, not horsemen. ;-)*

### Yikes! We Goofed!

In June's "Music in Gaming" feature, Kevin Manthei's credit for the music to *Civilization II: Fantastic Worlds* was inadvertently changed to read just *Civilization II*. Jeff Briggs, president and CEO of Firaxis, did the music for *Civilization II*.



The last guy who asked "Are they real?" is dead.



Actually, every guy she's met is dead.

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# HOT SHOTS





## Halo

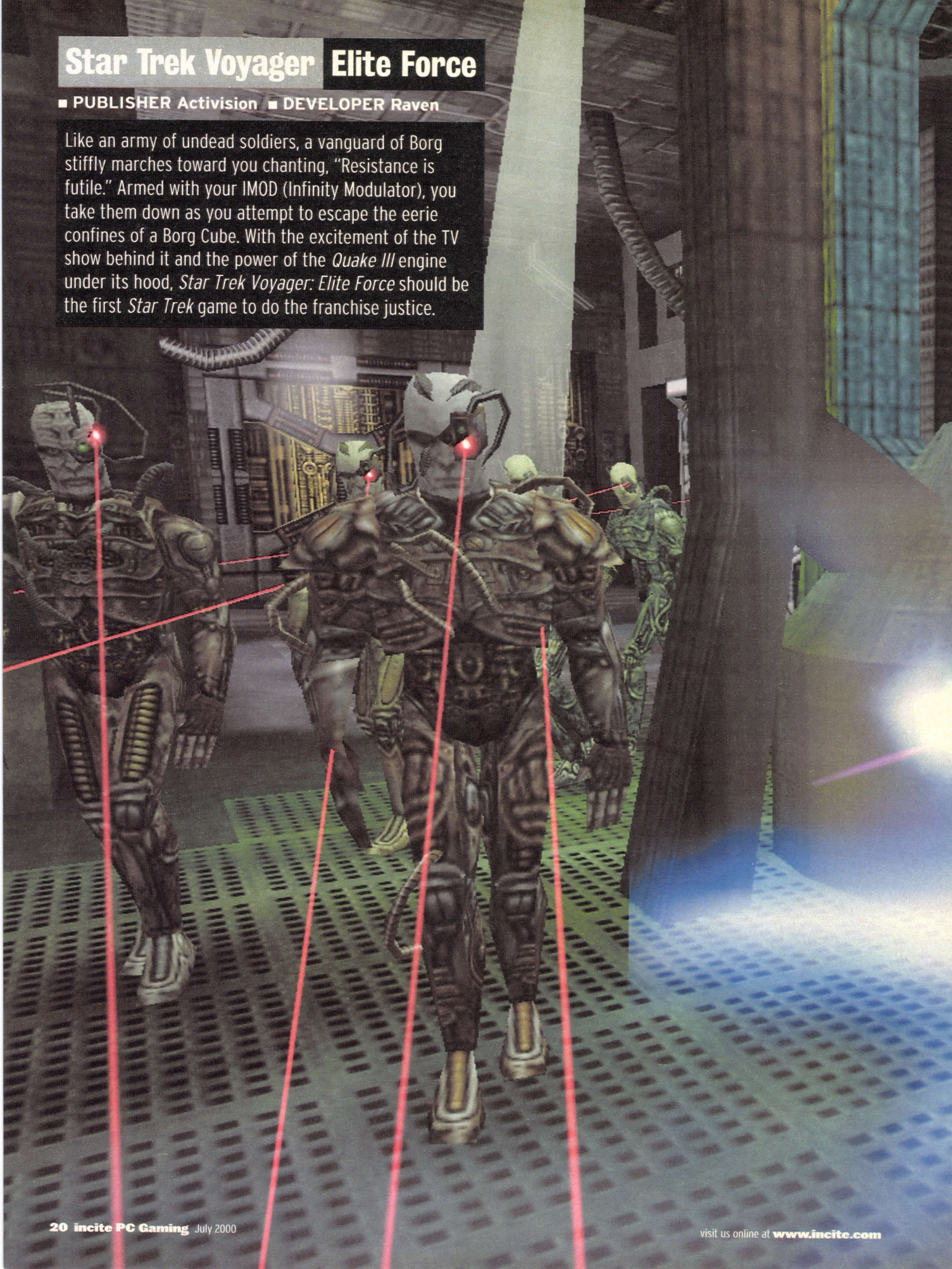
■ PUBLISHER Bungie Software ■ DEVELOPER Bungie Software

On a huge ring construct, the human race conducts a brutal guerrilla war against a hostile alien race, the Covenant. Towering and mysterious structures built by an ancient civilization contain vast secrets of technology that hold the key to your survival. Alien warships soar through the atmosphere, firing deadly energy beams at heavily armored space marines. Simply put, we can't wait to get our hands on a playable version of *Halo*.

# Star Trek Voyager Elite Force

■ PUBLISHER Activision ■ DEVELOPER Raven

Like an army of undead soldiers, a vanguard of Borg stiffly marches toward you chanting, "Resistance is futile." Armed with your IMOD (Infinity Modulator), you take them down as you attempt to escape the eerie confines of a Borg Cube. With the excitement of the TV show behind it and the power of the *Quake III* engine under its hood, *Star Trek Voyager: Elite Force* should be the first *Star Trek* game to do the franchise justice.







## American McGee's Alice

■ PUBLISHER Electronic Arts ■ DEVELOPER Rogue Entertainment

And now for something completely whacked-out. This chaotic area of Wonderland was once a fully enclosed room, until Alice decided to wander through it. To thwart Alice's journey, the evil ruler of Wonderland, The Queen of Hearts, has sent in the Card Guards and cast a massive, whirling wormhole around the entire region. With the walls, floors and ceiling sucked away and a spear-wielding enemy soldier at her side, Alice's once-close destination is no longer within reach.






ILLUSTRATION BY **BOB ROBINSON**

# TIME LINE: 1357

## Michael Crichton sets his sights on PC gaming and goes back in time to France in the process

**Is there anything** Michael Crichton can't do?

He writes best-sellers (*The Andromeda Strain*), produces big-screen blockbusters (*Jurassic Park*), and creates hit TV programs (*ER*). One of the few forms of entertainment the versatile scribe hasn't conquered is PC gaming. Crichton wants to change this with Timeline Studios, a new company that aims to create top-notch games powered by his florid imagination. The inaugural title, *Timeline*, is based on Crichton's best-selling 1999 novel. Crichton is also close to making a movie deal for the *Timeline* property.

*incite PC Gaming* got an exclusive first look at the adventure game, which is one part history lesson, one part *Back to the Future*. It's split into 20 levels, each one featuring a TV episode–like half-hour of gameplay, and jumps between modern-day and medieval France. You play the role of a student named Chris Hughes, who's accidentally zapped back to 14th-century France after he gets caught on the wrong end of a quantum-physics time machine. Much of the action takes place along the Dordogne River during the Hundred Years' War, in which the towns and castles of Castelgard and La Roque were conquests of French and English knights.

While he's stuck in 1357, Chris must rescue his professor from certain doom. To make matters worse, he has only a small window



**WHAT, NO FLUX CAPACITOR?** Crichton's new game will feature a time-traveling hero.

of opportunity to return to the present day. If he doesn't rescue the professor before time runs out, he will be stuck in the medieval world for the rest of his life. Along the way he will fight armies of knights, participate in a joust, and try to ensure that history is not changed in the process.

In the game you will explore ornate 3D environments, and wield a sword and a bow and arrows. Crichton, though, wants to emphasize nonlethal weaponry too, such as a stun gun, in order to limit the gore. "Although I've had violence in my work before – *Jurassic Park* was very violent," says Crichton, "I've tried to limit it [in the game]. I think to reach a mass market there needs to be more sensitivity." In more ways than one, timing is everything for Crichton's game. Expect to see it in stores this October; we'll provide a more detailed preview next month.

# Everyone Sins

## Ritual and ADV Films prepare a *SiN* movie



**BUG-FREE** The *SiN* animated DVD will be out by October.

**It's been two years** since Ritual Entertainment released *SiN*, and though fans of the first-person shooter have an indefinite wait for the sequel, they'll at least see more of the game in a new film coming out October 24.

*SiN* will be an hour-long animated movie and will bypass the theaters in favor of a direct-to-DVD release. Houston-based ADV Films is creating the opus and will use its anime background to give *SiN* a slight makeover. John Blade, *SiN*'s main character, becomes half-man, half-machine, and more female characters – no doubt sporting anime's distinctive big eyes and, uh, other features – will supplement the cast. Let's hope the DVD doesn't need a patch to run.

# DVD OF THE MONTH

# Club Dead

## More of *Fight Club* to love (or hate)

**Whether you thought** it boring or brilliant, dumb or dangerous, it's hard to deny that *Fight Club* left a mark on America's collective psyche. The Special Edition DVD ($34.98) packs just as big a wallop. Besides a wide-screen version of the film with 5.1 Dolby surround sound, this double-disc set has six behind-the-scenes vignettes, deleted scenes and outtakes, 17 TV commercials, and four different commentary tracks, including conversations between director David Fincher and stars Brad Pitt, Edward Norton, and Helena Bonham Carter. It's enough to make fans stop punching people.




# Hot and Cold

Let's bring out the thermometer to gauge the latest happenings in the PC gaming industry




**GeForce2 GTS**
The new graphics chip from nVidia has started appearing in PCs. Its state-of-the art features, such as per-pixel shading, are supposed to bring us one step closer to enjoying real-time cinematic experiences.

***Dino Crisis***
Three cheers for Capcom! The console company is porting over one of its blue-chip titles, *Dino Crisis*, to the PC. Maybe this dinosaur game will finally get the bitter taste of *Jurassic Park: Chaos Island* out of our mouths.

***Command & Conquer: Red Alert 2***
The dastardly Soviets and the valiant Allied Forces lock horns once again in Westwood's sequel. Kind of makes you nostalgic, huh?

**Duron**
It's the name of AMD's new value-priced CPU. "Spitfire," its original code name, was a much better moniker. Duron sounds like either a motor oil additive or a new Oldsmobile model.

**E3 Hype**
More than 2,400 upcoming games were on display at the Electronic Entertainment Expo (E3) in May. The bad news: Maybe 10 percent of those will be worth buying, and 10 percent will actually come out on time.

# Game BRIEFS

## Buzz and miscellany from the trenches

**Psygnosis'** hasty retreat from the U.S. was by no means a surprise. The beleaguered software company's scrawny sales figures for its most recent games, courtesy of The NPD Group, tell the whole story: *Panzer Elite* (16,000 units), *Nations – WWII Fighter Command* (4,000), *Expert Pool* (2,000), and *Formula 1 '99* (900). Even the company's highest-profile game of '99, *Drakan*, starring a Lara Croft look-alike, flopped, selling just 50,000 copies.... Tired of listening to all of the PC game naysayers out there, **Epic Games CEO Mark Rein** would like to point out that "consoles are no piece of cake either. Acclaim and Midway come to mind. Both of those companies could've turned a profit if they'd shipped [a PC title like] ***Unreal Tournament.*** PC gaming is very profitable if done right. Companies made all of these gambles on consoles, and they're now reporting losses because of sales slowdowns and new-platform transitions. They're idiots for abandoning the PC and never developing a good PC strategy, because that would have saved them." With *Unreal* and *Unreal Tournament* still raking in the dough (not to mention the cash Epic generates by licensing the *Unreal* engine), Rein can crow all he wants.... And the award for Most Conspicuous Absence at last month's Electronic Entertainment Expo goes to: 3D Realms' ***Duke Nukem Forever.*** Not only did the developer refuse to show the game on the show floor – either out in the open or behind closed doors – but it also passed on showing even video footage of the eternally delayed game. "We do not believe including *DNF* in the E3 dog and pony show will benefit our goal with the game," says Producer



DUKE NUKEM FOREVER



ROBIN WILLIAMS



MONKEY ISLAND

George Broussard in his plan file. The plan is "to surprise the player with unexpected content and gameplay." Grassroots reaction has been surprisingly positive. "I hope I don't see anything on *Duke* until it comes out. The game will be much cooler if gamers don't know every weapon, item, locale, and monster," one fan said after the announcement.... Rumors of **Microsoft's** acquiring Japan's **Square** (*Final Fantasy*) make no sense. Sony, a longtime supporter and partner of Square, would have something to say about it, since it's hard to imagine Microsoft's being charitable and letting Square develop for the PlayStation 2 – the one machine that stands in the way of the X-Box's success.... Score one for obsessive sci-fi fans. An online petition lobbying George Lucas to green-light the ***Star Wars Trilogy*** **DVDs** seems to have worked. Lucasfilm has officially confirmed that the much drooled-after DVDs are in production and will include even more new and deleted scenes than the ones found on 1997 rereleases. You have a lot of time to save up: The DVDs won't come out until 2001.... Just when you thought LucasArts had completely forgone non-*Star Wars* game development, the company has announced a new, 3D **Escape from Monkey Island** to the cheers of the many fans of the original.... Speaking of Sega, the console maker hasn't given up on the PC. Says a spokesman, **"Sega PC** is still alive and kicking. The lack of releases was attributed to distribution contracts and slow development, but look for Sega PC titles to come out in the near future." Sega's last major releases, *Yoot Tower* and *Sega Rally*, came out back in '98.... How much of a PC gaming fanatic is **Robin Williams?** He's addicted to ***Rainbow Six*** and ***The Sims,*** and is all too familiar with the obsolescence ogre: "If you try to stay on top, you go completely insane. You get Pentium envy," he told the *New York Post*. He then went on to imitate the prototypical, power-hungry PC gamer: "I need more speed! I need 800MHz!".... No joke: The latest parody title from the yuksters at Simon & Schuster Interactive, publisher of *Deer Avenger* and *Panty Raider*, is ***Who Wants to Beat Up a Millionaire?*** Ouch. Take that, Reege.

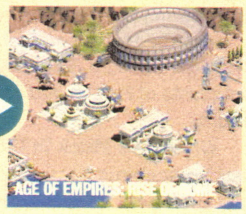
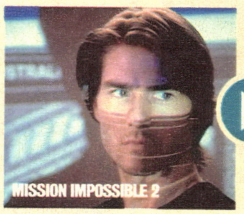
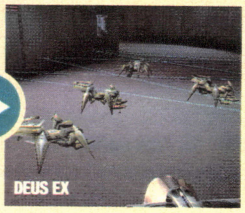
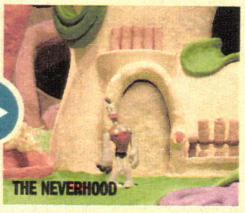
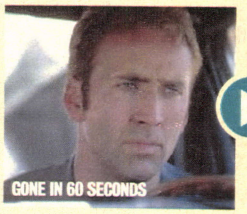
PHOTO OF ROBIN WILLIAMS BY **SHOOTING STAR**

# Little Big Screens

## Summer movie/PC game match-ups

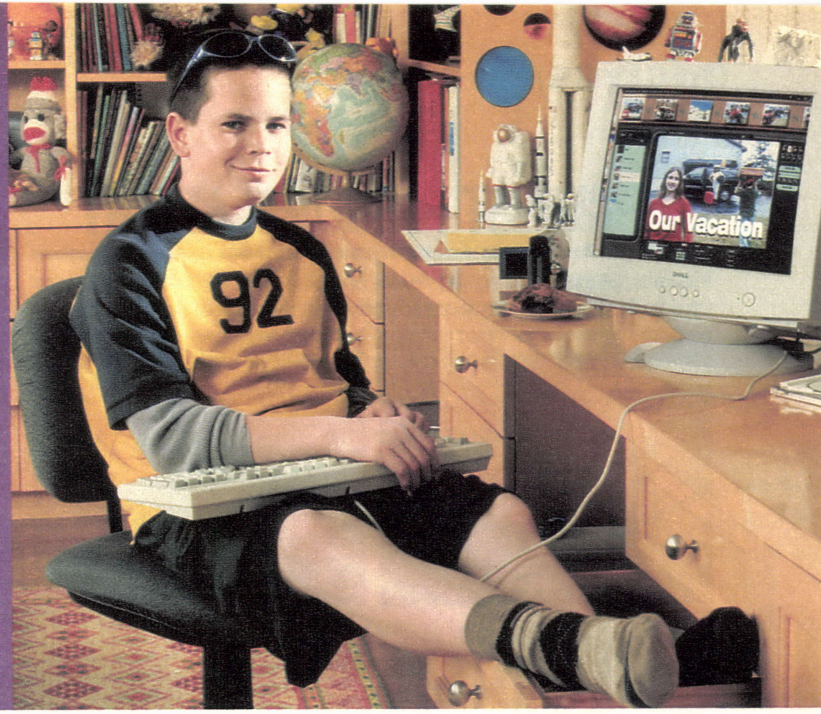
Summer's in full bloom, which means so are the season's big-budget movie blockbusters. These popcorn thrillers don't have true PC game tie-ins, thankfully, but that doesn't mean you can't get close to the experience at home on your computer.

**We matched up some past and present PC games with a few of Hollywood's heaviest hitters of the summer.**

| IF YOU LIKED... | THEN TRY... |
|---|---|
|  GLADIATOR |  AGE OF EMPIRES: RISE OF ROME |
|  TITAN A.E. |  STARLANCER |
|  MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 2 |  DEUS EX |
|  CHICKEN RUN |  THE NEVERHOOD |
|  GONE IN 60 SECONDS |  GRAND THEFT AUTO |
|  THE PATRIOT |  BRAVEHEART... JUST KIDDING! |

*THE PATRIOT* PHOTO COURTESY OF **COLUMBIA/TRISTAR**

# 17 hours of our trip to Mt. Rushmore edited down to 4 thrilling minutes.






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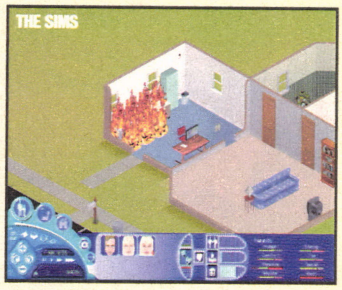
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# SIM-CEREST FORM OF FLATTERY

**When WizardWorks' new *Emergency Rescue: Firefighters* game arrived in our offices, we immediately had déjà vu. Coincidence or separated at birth? You be the judge:**




# Blocks Party

## A supersize *Tetris* at Brown

**And you thought** playing games on your 21-inch monitor was pretty big. Compared with what a few students from Brown University set up on campus in April, it's pea-size. These ambitious Ivy Leaguers turned a side of the school's sciences library into a 14-story-tall display that featured a giant, playable version of *Tetris*. The game, which ran on a Linux-powered PC, used 10,000 light bulbs that were hung in the library's windows.



PHOTO BY CLARA KIM/BROWN UNIVERSITY

**FALLING FAST** So, can you play from the Space Shuttle?

# CAMPAIGN ROADSHOW

**Every month our readers scrutinize the print and TV media for inventive, humorous, or off-the-wall adverts. Here are this month's picks.**

**TOP** PRINT ADS FOR MAY

**1 G.O.D.**
KISS PSYCHO CIRCUS

Beth, what can we do? It seems everybody's getting amped to join the KISS army. Still no word if Gene Simmons' tongue will have magical powers.



**2 MPLAYER.COM**

Apparently, our readers are a bunch of masochists who enjoy a size-7 Sketcher to the head. We're starting to have some funny thoughts about LittleBunny_32 as well.




**3 IFUSE.COM**

"Come on, you alien bastard!" This ad looks good but provides few details. Still, it was cool enough to get our readers to punch the URL into their Web browsers.



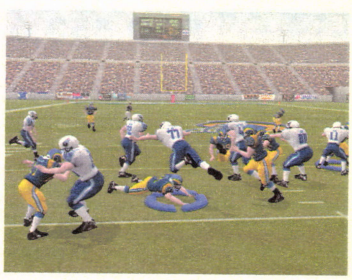
# IT'S A MADDEN, MADDEN WORLD

## Electronic Arts gives *incite* secret details on its next football game



**BOYS OF FALL** *Madden 2001*'s visuals look dramatically better than those in last year's version.

**Has the action** in the NFL training camps already gotten you excited about a new season of gridiron grappling? Here's what's happening at EA Sports' NFL training camp. The new *Madden* will more than hold its own on the PC.



Every player in the league will sport the same equipment he wears in real life, right down to the wristbands, turf tape, and elbow pads. Developers have also reworked collision detection. A player's weight and height will be factored into each bone-jarring hit: Scrawny defensive backs will find it a lot harder pushing around a car-size fullback, for instance. *Madden* should coincide with the NFL's September 3 kickoff.

## >>FUN FACTS

**Number of copies of *EverQuest* sold by Christmas 1999:** 225,000

**Number of inhabitants of Christmas Island:** 2,373

SOURCES: 989 STUDIOS; *CIA WORLD FACTBOOK*

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# QUOTES+QUIPS

GET TO KNOW THE PEOPLE BEHIND THE GAMES YOU PLAY

THIS MONTH'S QUESTION:

## WHAT ACTIVITIES HELP YOU GET THROUGH A CREATIVE BLOCK?

**American McGee,** Creative Director, EA *(American McGee's Alice)* I've relied upon an ODD FASCINATION WITH MONKEYS to help me through my dry spells and blocks. For some strange reason, if I sit down and write "monkey fiction," the block goes away, and I'm free to go back to work.

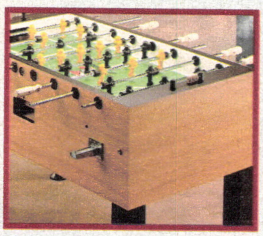
**Steve Elwell,** Associate Producer, Raven Software *(Star Trek: Voyager Elite Force)* I was a musician for 10 years as a bass guitar player, so whenever I go through a creative block, I GO HOME AND PRACTICE MY SCALES.

**John Jack,** Producer, Infogrames (*Test Drive Cycles*) FOOSBALL is a big help in getting through some tough problems. The competition and "analog" gameplay let you put things in perspective.

**Alex Garden,** Producer, Relic Entertainment (*Homeworld*) When I'm feeling creatively blocked, I walk out of the office and enjoy something that has ABSOLUTELY NOTHING TO DO WITH COMPUTERS OR TECHNOLOGY OR GAMES.

**Chris Taylor,** President/Designer, Gas Powered Games (*Dungeon Siege*) Necessity is the mother of invention.... A creative block is an opportunity to be extra creative. In this business we should be so lucky as to have the time to employ some fancy technique to become unblocked....There is just NO TIME FOR THIS SILLY BLOCKAGE.

**Matt Powers,** Producer, Infogrames (*Slave Zero*) A healthy dose of *UNREAL TOURNAMENT* or *QUAKE III* can take your mind off anything – keeps you sharp but frees up the mind. I can jump in for 15 minutes, have some fun, and then get back to the business at hand.



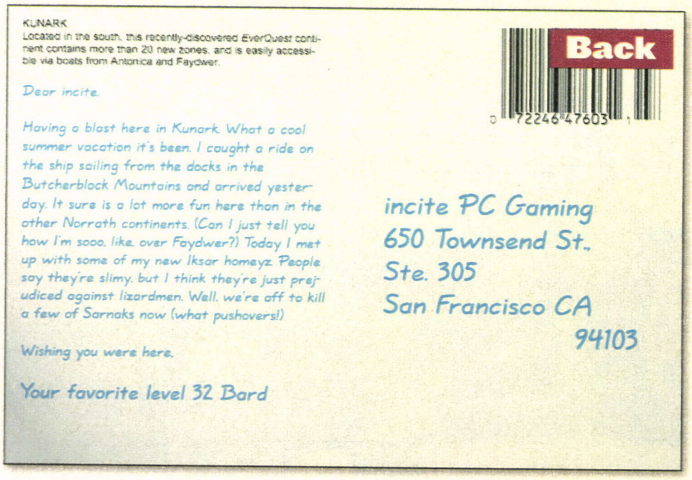
FOOSBALL "Analog" gameplay.



QUAKE III ARENA All digital, baby.

## YEAH, WHATEVER!



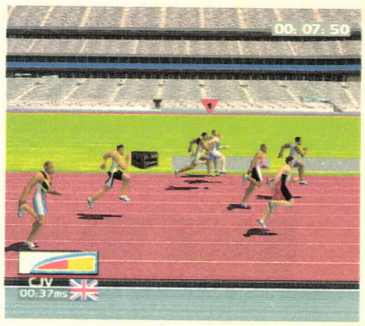




# FIVE-RING CIRCUS

### Eidos unveils its Summer Olympics game

**"Official Sponsors" of** the 2000 Olympics in Sydney are more common than shinsplints at a track and field event. "Official Video Games" of the Summer Olympics, on the other hand, are a lot more rare. All of 'em will bear Eidos' name on the box because of the company's six-year deal to develop games using the license, which it bought from the International Olympic Committee.

Eidos' first offering – *Sydney 2000,* developed by U.K.-based Attention To Detail – offers a dizzying variety of events, including javelin, high jump, 100-meter sprint, weight lifting, skeet shooting, platform diving, and even kayak K1 slalom. What, no synchronized swimming? C'mon, Eidos!




MAD DASH TO THE FINISH Be the fastest man alive in *Sidney 2000.*

# Live the game
# Feel the pain



GRAPHICS BY rage 128 PRO

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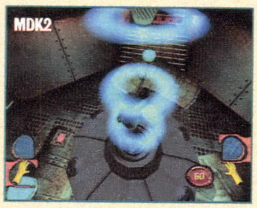
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# inciteful Web

**If you're reading this page right now, you've obviously got a thing for getting information in that old-fashioned, "I can hold this magazine and take it to the bathroom with me" kind of way. But what you may not know is that there are a number of things you can get from our online site that complement what you'll find in the pages of *incite PC Gaming* — things you just won't be able to find anywhere else.**

### >> THE HOTSHOT

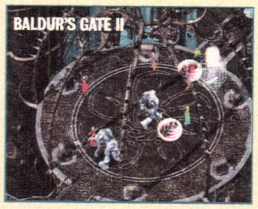
Got bandwidth? We've got the artwork. **Big, bold, bodacious screenshots** of top PC games can be yours when you download one of our beautifully detailed, hi-res "hotshots" from incite.com.




*Kunark, Hitman,* and *MDK2* are just a few of the games we play and set up stunning hotshots for. Plus, we often post the hotshots you see in the magazine, so you can download them and use them as wallpaper.

### >> GOT EVEN MORE BANDWIDTH?

Then you might like our **exclusive game movies.** We recently created an entire section dedicated to movies so that you could seek out the flicks quickly and efficiently. Want to know how *Starlancer* or *Baldur's Gate II* really looks? Want proof that *Alien vs. Predator Gold* is really a four-star game? Download a movie and take a peek for yourself. And once you're done, check out the archives for older movies, like those we did of *Black & White* and *Halo.*



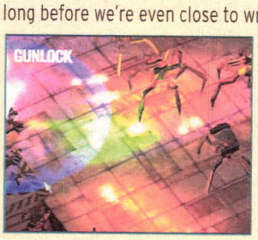

### >> FEELING ARTSY?

Read our **Friday haiku news roundups.** We sum up everything that happens each week in tidy five-seven-five verses to give you your dose of poetic gaming for the evening.

*And to our delight,*
*everyone really likes it –*
*popular poems.*

### >> FIRST LOOK

Interested in **early screenshots?** So are we. That's why we post first looks. Before we know enough to write a preview, long before we're even close to writing a review, we post first looks online so you can see games like *Hired Team, 1906, Gunlok,* and others you might not have heard of yet. First looks make it easy to keep up with what's new and what's going to be hot later on.




# BRAIN FREEZE!

## A new ice cream has caffeine in it, but will it give you a good jolt?

**When it comes** to food, Wheaties is, and always will be, the breakfast of champions. But in gaming, Jolt Cola is the nectar of the gods.

With nearly twice the caffeine of Pepsi, Jolt has long been the cocktail of choice for thirsty gamers who don't think they need to sleep – ever. But now the no-doze deity has a bit of competition from Wired, an Italian vanilla ice cream from Jeremy's Microbatch that's loaded with caffeine. How well does this dessert stack up next to the jitters-inducing Jolt?




### ■ EFFECTS

**Jolt:** Will keep you up and alert so you can play *Quake III Arena* all night.

**Coffee:** Will give you the pickup you need to drive to work, where you can play games instead of work.

**Wired:** Will keep you up and alert so you can play *Quake III Arena* all night, while soothing the depression you feel over not having a girlfriend to play real games with anymore.

### JITTER INDUCERS

| The Culprits | Serving | Caffeine |
|---|---|---|
| Coffee | 7 oz. | 80-135 mg |
| Jolt Cola | 12 oz. | 71.2 mg |
| Wired Ice Cream | 3.5 oz. | 40-70mg |
| Coke | 12 oz. | 45.6 mg |
| Diet Coke | 12 oz. | 45.6 mg |
| Pepsi | 12 oz. | 37.2 mg |
| Tea | 7 oz. | 40 mg |
| 7 Up | 12 oz. | 0 mg |

# GAMES MAKE YOU MAD

## Study shows that violent games put you on the crazy train

**In a recent** report published in the *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology,* Professor Karen Dill, a media and violence expert from Lenoir-Rhyne College, concludes that "aggressive behavior and hostile thoughts are significantly increased in players of violent video games. In a sense they provide a complete learning environment for aggression."

Far be it from us to dispute the theory that playing *Quake* and *Soldier of Fortune* can drive you over the edge. (It *must* be true if someone in academia says it, right?) So, assuming these bad influences do make certified violent lunatics out of all of us, we'll need something to play while locked up in our padded cells, won't we?

Herewith, some loony game and movie recommendations to help all of us pass the time.

- *Sanitarium* (ASC Games)
- *Postal* (Ripcord)
- *I Have No Mouth, and I Must Scream* (Cyberdreams)
- *Krazy Ivan* (Psygnosis)
- *Phantasmagoria 2: A Puzzle of Flesh* (Sierra)
- *Lose Your Marbles* (SegaSoft)

And to make it a Blockbuster Night:

- *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*
- *Falling Down*
- *The Shining*
- *Girl, Interrupted*

# FASTER, SMARTER AND MORE INTENSE BATTLES THAN ANY GAME EVER. PERIOD.



"Quake III Arena refines the genre and takes it to new places" - Los Angeles Times



"Multiplayer Game of the Year" - GameSpot



"...Quake III will revolutionize the industry" - PC Magazine

# QUAKE III ARENA

## From the Creators of Doom

Quake III Arena combines all the excitement and carnage you expect from id Software with ground breaking artificial intelligence and the most powerful 3D engine ever conceived for a game. Whether you want to play a classic fragmatch in the single player mode or try your luck against the online pros, Quake III Arena delivers the best game play yet backed up with stunning graphics and 30 challenging maps. Its got some amazing new tricks to show off. The only question is: do you?

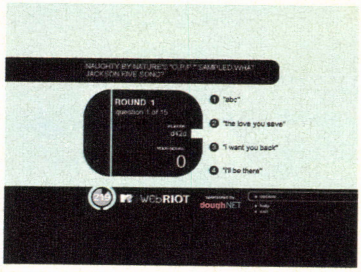
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www.idsoftware.com

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MATURE M CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

Animated Blood and Gore
Animated Violence

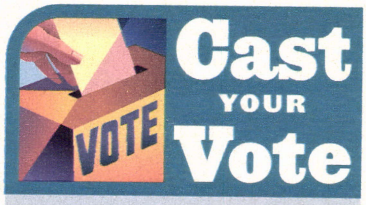



**WHAT A RIOT** If you think your music knowledge is up to snuff, check it out.

# Go Wild

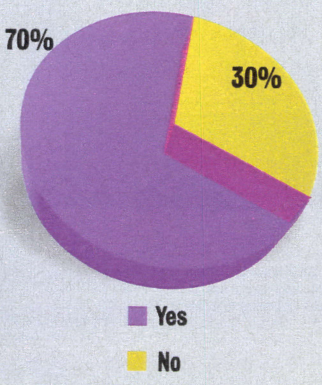
## It's time to show what you know

**Think you've got** the most arcane musical knowledge? After a quick download from **webriot.mtv.com,** you can start playing WebRIOT, MTV's music trivia game show, from the comfort of your own home. You won't be subjected to spastic host Ahmet Zappa, though you will be subjected to inane sex/age checks in the chat room between games. You can play along with the TV show or simply jump into any online-only round. (Games happen around the clock.) High scorers in the games can win prizes such as portable MP3 players and *CDNow* gift certificates.




## Cast YOUR Vote

After the X-Box comes out, will you continue to buy PC games?




Source: www.incitegames.com poll (February 4, 2000). Visit our Web site and cast your vote now!

# Dial Up // Your Guide to Online Gaming




**As any heart-broken soul would tell you, the dating scene can be hell. Thankfully, life is a lot easier for solitary players who are looking to hook up with others in online games. Choosing a provider, however, can be a daunting task. There is an abundance of free Web-based matchmaking services out there, so to make your Internet soul-searching easier, here's a handy reference guide to online gaming's high rollers.**

### Heat.net

*www.heat.net*

Retail games are the focus here. Heat.net's target audience is the more hardcore gamers who are there for the games. Offering everything from *Age of Empires* to *Quake*, Heat tries to get players together for games as easily as possible and doesn't bother much with chat rooms or "classic" games.

### MSN Zone

*www.zone.com*

Owned by the giant Microsoft Network, the Zone's focus is, of course, Microsoft games. You can find any new Microsoft game with multiplayer capabilities here, as well as a few prominent non-Microsoft titles, such as *Rainbow Six*. Though there are tons of classic and free games, the lobbies and chat rooms for the Zone can be cumbersome at times.

### Mplayer

*www.mplayer.com*

Mplayer has a bit of everything. You can find many prominent retail titles here as well as a large selection of chat rooms and free card and board games. Since a game publisher doesn't own it, Mplayer acts as an independent matchmaking service for games from a host of companies, such as SSI, Red Storm, and Electronic Arts.

### WON.net

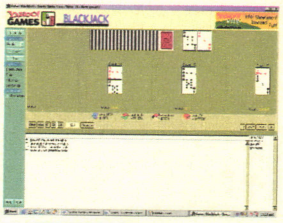
www.won.net

Owned by Sierra On-Line, WON.net offers a simple interface and friendly environment in which to play various classic games, such as hearts or checkers, as well as retail games published by Sierra. The social aspect of gaming is the focus here, and there is an abundance of chat rooms that resemble an AOL lobby. Since the site is targeted toward the younger crowd, there are some built-in safeguards for kids in the chat rooms on the site.

### Yahoo!

*www.yahoo.com*

The busiest search engine out there, Yahoo! also has a large selection of puzzle, board, and card games. With its heavy traffic and light downloads, there is always a large number of players logged on. Those looking to play retail games are out of luck, though.




**DO YOU YAHOO?** Well, don't if you're looking for *Rainbow Six.*



**TEN-SIX ME** Heat.net features classic games as well as *Quake.*

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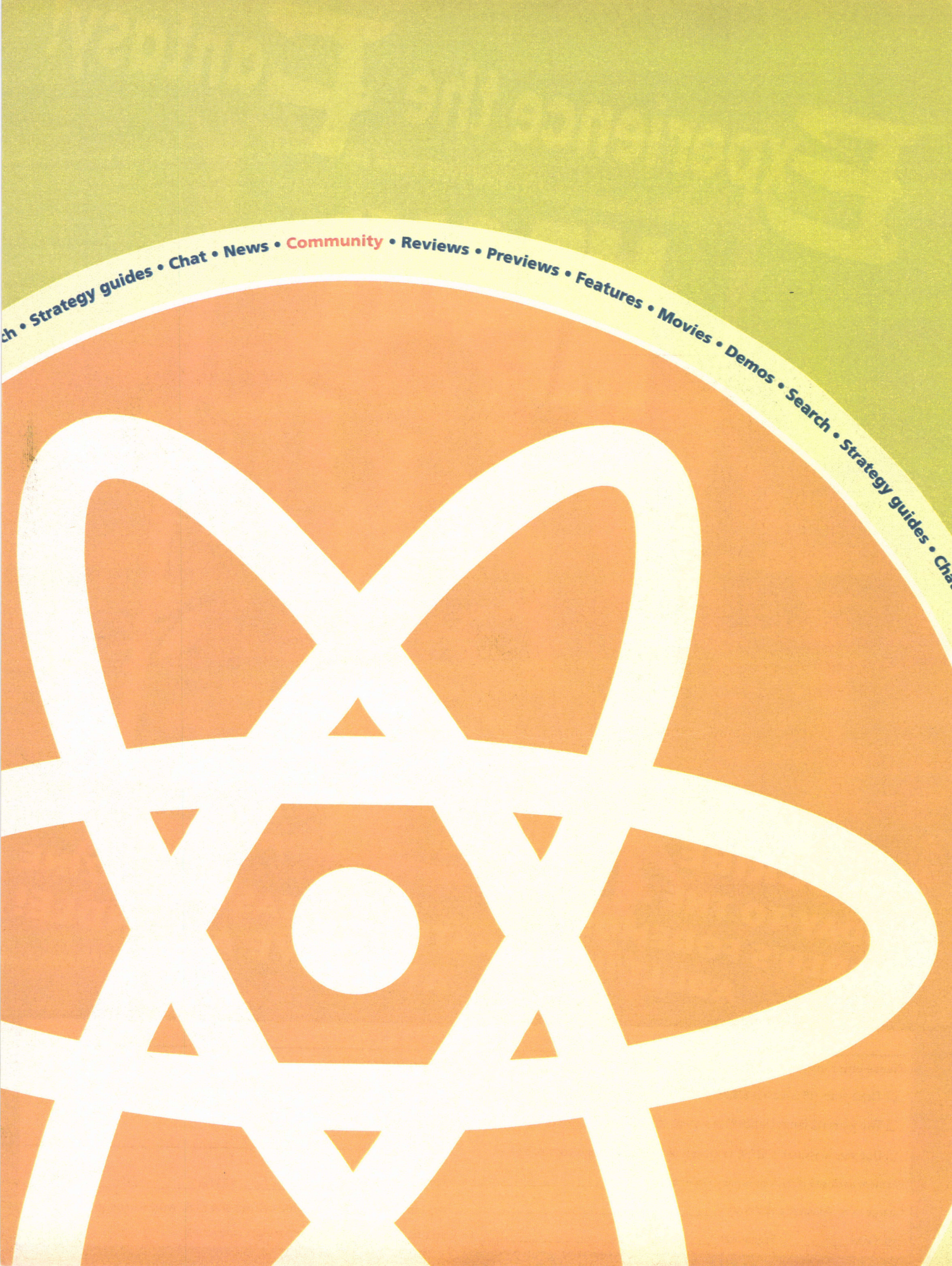
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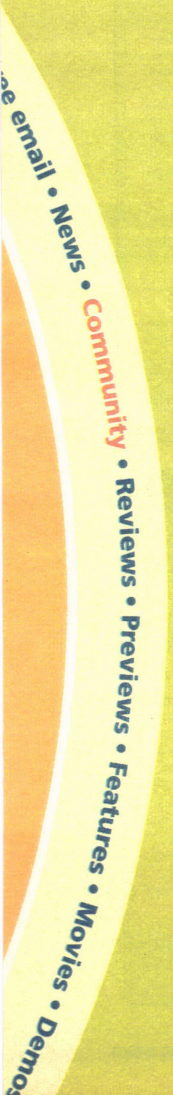
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# TOP 20

In association with The NPD Group, here are the best-selling PC games for March.

**1** ▲2
### Who Wants to Be a Millionaire
• Disney Interactive • Lifestyle
There have been some rousing battles as of late: Microsoft vs. the Justice Department, John Rocker vs. anyone who isn't a Braves fan, Elián Gonzalez's aunt vs. Janet Reno... and *Millionaire* vs. *The Sims*. These two software heavyweights continue to flip-flop places on the chart.




**2** ▼1
### The Sims
• Electronic Arts • Simulation
EA's life simulator will find it more difficult retaking the top spot with a sequel to *Millionaire* now on sale.



**3** –3
### RollerCoaster Tycoon
• Hasbro • Simulation
Our suggestion for the next *Tycoon* game: *Las Vegas Casino Tycoon*. Think of the possibilites.



**4** N
### C&C Tiberian Sun: Firestorm
• Westwood • Simulation
*Tiberian Sun* dropped off the radar recently, so Westwood really needed this expansion pack.



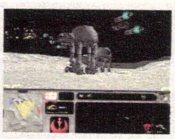
**5** ▲6
### RCT: Corkscrew Follies
• Hasbro • Simulation
*Corkscrew Follies* is fun, but Chevy Chase fans really want a WallyWorld Theme Park add-on pack.



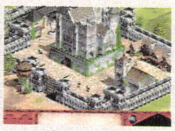
**6** N
### Lego Island
• Mindscape • Simulation
Kudos to Mindscape for turning the Lego brand into a lucrative PC game series.



**7** N
### Star Wars: Force Commander
• LucasArts • Simulation
Best feature in the game: stomping on scurrying Ewoks with your AT-ST. Nothing is more rewarding.



**8** ▼5
### Age of Empires II
• Microsoft • Strategy
Microsoft has been under siege more than any empire seen in this real-time-strategy game.



**9** ▲12
### Unreal Tournament
• GT Interactive • Shooter
While *Quake III Arena* has dropped out of the Top 20, *UT* continues its strong hold in the Top 10.



**10** ▲11
### Half-Life
• Sierra • Shooter
*Life* is good for Sierra and Valve: This game is almost two years old and still selling strongly.



**11** N
### Star Trek Armada
• Interplay • Simulation
This game, along with *Force Commander*, shows that sci-fi licenses still work in this industry.

**12** ▼9
### Rainbow Six Gold Pack Bundle
• Red Storm • Strategy
Fellow author Michael Crichton joins Tom Clancy in the game biz with *Timeline*.

**13** N
### Might & Magic VIII
• 3DO • RPG
3DO needed a Top 20 hit, especially since its other games aren't selling well.

**14** ▲15
### Nox
• Electronic Arts • RPG
Once *Diablo II* comes out, this wannabe will drop off of the charts. But for now it's doing well.

**15** ▲16
### Millennium GamePak
• Valuesoft • Various
Who knew a bunch of second-rate games could sell so well? The geniuses at Valuesoft, obviously.

**16** ▲17
### Hoyle Casino 2000
• Sierra • Lifestyle
All of the excitement without losing real money. We're all better off playing virtual blackjack.

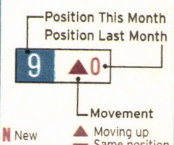
**17** ▲18
### Family 3 Pack
• Hasbro Interactive • Lifestyle
Laugh all you want at these budget-priced games. They pay the bills.

**18** N
### Sim Mania Pack
• Masque • Lifestyle
EA hops on the budget-title bandwagon with this collection of sim games.

**19** N
### Casino Game Pack
• Masque • Lifestyle
We think Donald Trump needs to endorse a casino game. *Leisure Suit Larry Casino*, perhaps?

**20** N
### SimCity 3000
• Maxis • Simulation
Last year's best-selling game is finally losing steam. It was a great run while it lasted.

### CHART LEGEND




### RANK RULES

Info provided by The NPD Group (NPD TRSTS Interactive Entertainment Service). These are the latest charts available at the time of publication.

NPD
THE NPD GROUP, INC.

## TOP 10 Racing

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | –1 | **Dirt Track Racing** • WizardWorks |
| 2 | ▲5 | **Need for Speed 3 Classic** • EA |
| 3 | ▼2 | **NASCAR 99** • Sierra |
| 4 | ▼3 | **NASCAR Racing 3** • Sierra |
| 5 | ▲10 | **Midtown Madness** • Microsoft |
| 6 | ▲14 | **Need for Speed: High Stakes** • EA |
| 7 | N | **All American NASCAR 2** • Sierra |
| 8 | ▼4 | **Harley Davidson** • WizardWorks |
| 9 | N | **Hard Trucks:...Victory** • Sierra |
| 10 | N | **Need for Speed: Porsche** • EA |

EA's latest *Need for Speed* breaks onto the chart at No. 10. Expect the Porsche-licensed game to zoom up a few spots next month.

## TOP 10 Sports

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | –1 | **Deer Hunter 3** • WizardWorks |
| 2 | –2 | **Big Game Hunter** • HeadGames |
| 3 | N | **High Heat Baseball 2001** • 3DO |
| 4 | ▼3 | **Deer Avenger** • S&S Interactive |
| 5 | ▲7 | **Deer Hunter 2** • GT Interactive |
| 6 | ▼4 | **Whitetail Fever** • Valusoft |
| 7 | ▼6 | **Deer Avenger 2** • S&S Interactive |
| 8 | –8 | **Links LS 2000** • Microsoft |
| 9 | –9 | **Tiger Woods Collection** • EA |
| 10 | –10 | **Rocky Mt. Hunter** • WizardWorks |

Surprise of the month: Microsoft's *Links* game beats out EA's *Tiger Woods* titles for a higher spot on the leader board.

## TOP 10 Strategy/RPG

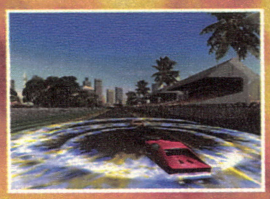
| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | –1 | **The Sims** • EA |
| 2 | –2 | **R.Coaster Tycoon** • Hasbro Int. |
| 3 | N | **C&C: Firestorm** • Westwood |
| 4 | –4 | **R.Coaster Corkscrew** • Hasbro Int. |
| 5 | N | **Lego Island** • Mindscape |
| 6 | N | **Force Commander** • LucasArts |
| 7 | ▼3 | **Age of Empires II** • Microsoft |
| 8 | N | **Star Trek: Armada** • interplay |
| 9 | ▼6 | **Rainbow Six Gold** • Red Storm |
| 10 | N | **Might & Magic VIII** • 3DO |

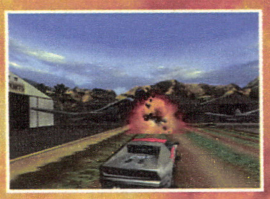
Mainstream titles (*The Sims, RollerCoaster Tycoon*) prevail over hardcore gaming ones (*Age of Empires, Might & Magic*).

# BREAKNECK









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# THE CHOICES ARE YOURS




You can Hack it

You can Discuss it



"Early candidate for Game of the Year" PC Gamer

"The game that comes the closest to replacing reality as we know it" IGN

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AMD

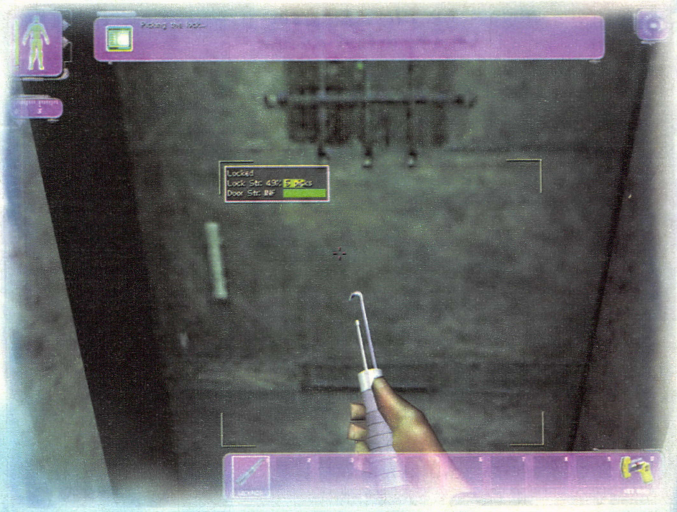
ION STORM

MATURE M CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

Animated Violence
Animated Blood

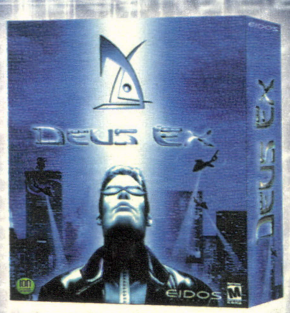
# BUT SO ARE THE CONSEQUENCES

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# The Russians Are Coming!

Westwood unveils **RED ALERT 2,** the long-awaited sequel to the wildly popular *Red Alert*

■ PUBLISHER **Electronic Arts** ■ DEVELOPER **Westwood Studios** ■ GENRE **Real-time strategy** ■ PLAYERS **1-8** ■ RELEASE DATE **Q4 2000**

**INSIGHT**

**Q. Is this game another *Sole Survivor?***

**A.** Ouch! *C&C: Sole Survivor* was an online game in which you spent much time getting killed en route to your teammates. And Westwood is trying like mad to forget about that debacle.

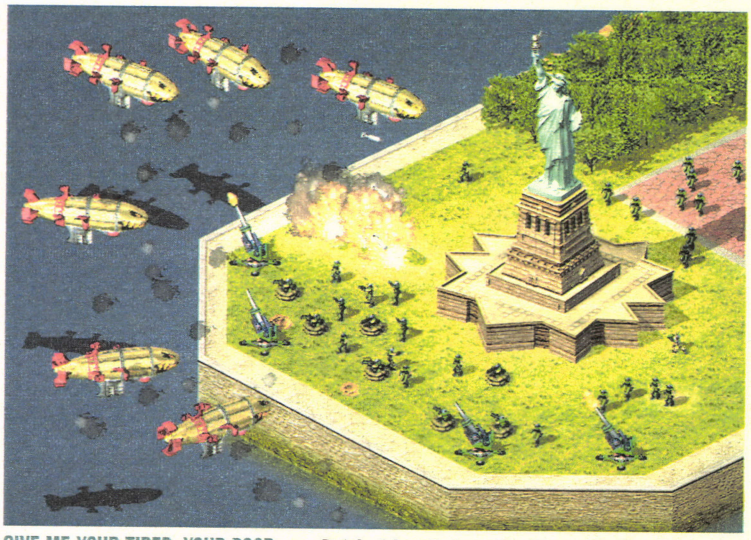
**Q. If the Russians are victorious in *Red Alert 2*, will we all have to wait in seemingly endless lines for necessities like cigarettes and toilet paper?**

**A.** If the Russians win, you'll probably be dead. So, no, you won't be waiting in line for a damn thing.

**In the original *Red Alert,* Einstein went back in time to defeat Adolph Hitler. This led to an entirely different and likewise distasteful situation – the rise of an extremely hostile Soviet Union. *Red Alert 2* will pick up the story where its predecessor left off.**

***By William O'Neal***

After the defeat of the Soviet Union and the death of Stalin, a new premier, Alexei Romanoff, took control of the battered nation and covertly set about the task of returning the Soviet Union to its prior place as a world military power. The game's executive producer, Mark Skaggs, elaborates: Romanoff "created secret bases around the world and continued to build machines of war. He created the Dreadnought warship to add to the Soviet Navy [and] Kirov heavy bombers to add to the Soviet Air Force, and he added improvements to the Tesla Coil and the Iron Curtain." In addition, Romanoff charged his scientists with studying mind-control techniques, various other forms of psychic warfare, and cloning technology.



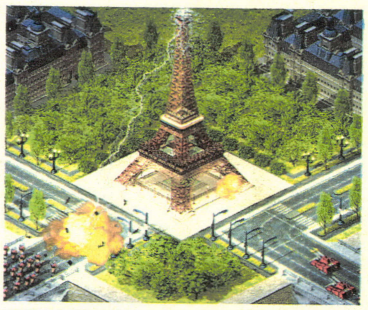
**GIVE ME YOUR TIRED, YOUR POOR....** But feel free to keep the Kirov warships. Here they go about destroying one of America's favorite landmarks.

"As he was finally getting the last bits of his arsenal together, he installed mind-controlled Soviet operatives in key United States military installations," says Skaggs. Once everything was in place he ordered an invasion of the States. And it is against this backdrop that you're dropped into the world of *Red Alert 2.*

Westwood's motivation behind *Red Alert 2,* says Producer Harvard E. Bonin Jr., was "to take the war to the U.S." To that end, you'll spend the brunt of your time fighting in, around, and for control of recognizable monuments, such as the Statue of Liberty, Golden Gate Bridge, and even the White House and Washington Monument.



**NOW, THAT'S A BATTLE!** The fighting in *Red Alert 2* will be frenetic as all get-out. You had better get your brain in gear and prepare yourself to micromanage a gang of units.



**VIVE LA FRANCE!** The Eiffel Tower is ready to dispense some serious damage.



**SOVIET TESLA TROOPER**

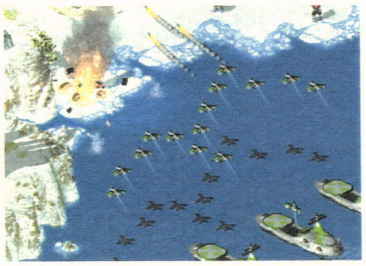
**What the hell?** Running into this Tesla Trooper on the battlefield can be quite a shocking experience, to say the least.

Urban combat will be an integral part of *Red Alert 2*. "You'll be able to garrison buildings and create choke points throughout the cities. We really wanted to make sure that the terrain became a much more important part of the game than it had previously been in *C&C*," explains Bonin. Infantrymen will be able to enter nearly any building in the game for garrison purposes. And this isn't just a bullet point, as garrisoned buildings will be formidable fighting structures.

While the game uses the same engine as the original *Red Alert*, it has undergone some changes. In an attempt to immerse you in the action even more, Westwood will provide a closer view of the battlefield in the game. The user interface too has received a face-lift. In the previous offering, choosing units and issuing commands was done via a circuitous array of menus. This time around Westwood has simplified the act of running a war by using tabs instead, which helps the situation a lot.

True to the strategy-game formula, *Red Alert 2* won't suffer from a lack of resource building. "We're trying to stay away from those intensive, exploratory types of missions. We want to know about production. We want people to feel like they're building the base while they're thinking about what they can do with the units," says Bonin.

The game's structures too will be an important part of *Red Alert 2*'s economy model. Oil derricks will provide a constant influx of cash, while airports will allow for para drops of anything from troops to vehicles. And you'll need to keep a close eye on all your means of production. The improved artificial intelligence of the enemy troops means they will take advantage of any and every weakness they can find in your defense.



**AIR ATTACK** These air units provide a perfect strike force in *Red Alert 2*.

*Red Alert 2* will boast a plethora of new weapons for Allies and Soviets alike. Worried that your beloved U.S. is about to buckle to the Russian onslaught? Then let loose the Allied weather-control machine or prism canons. If you're playing from the side of the Soviet Union and you need that added push to completely crush the capitalists, then the Soviet's mind-controlled giant squids ought to be enough to dampen any sailor's morale.

From the looks of things, *Red Alert 2* seems poised to be another successful title. It looks like Westwood *did* learn from *Sole Survivor* after all.



**FRICKIN' COMMUNISTS!** The Soviet Union mounts a combined land and sea assault. Watch out for these types of attacks: They can be deadly.



**FORGET ABOUT THE BRIDGE** When all hope is lost, kill as many of the enemy as you can. At least you'll go down swinging!



**NOD, MEET YER MAKER** With firepower like this, who needs support?

# C&C Up Close and Personal

## RENEGADE is going to give you all of the first-person *C&C* you can handle

■ PUBLISHER **Electronic Arts** ■ DEVELOPER **Westwood Studios** ■ GENRE **Action** ■ PLAYERS **1-8** ■ RELEASE DATE **Q4 2000**

**INSIGHT**

**Q. Will Lorenzo Lamas Jr. make an appearance?**

**A.** Westwood was decidedly tight-lipped about the possibility of Mr. Lamas appearing in the game. Keep your fingers crossed.

**Q. Is it true that the commando consumes tiberium for its hallucinogenic powers?**

**A.** You'll encounter plenty of tiberium. The thing is, though, it'll kill you. But who knows? Maybe it'll be a crazy Technicolor death.

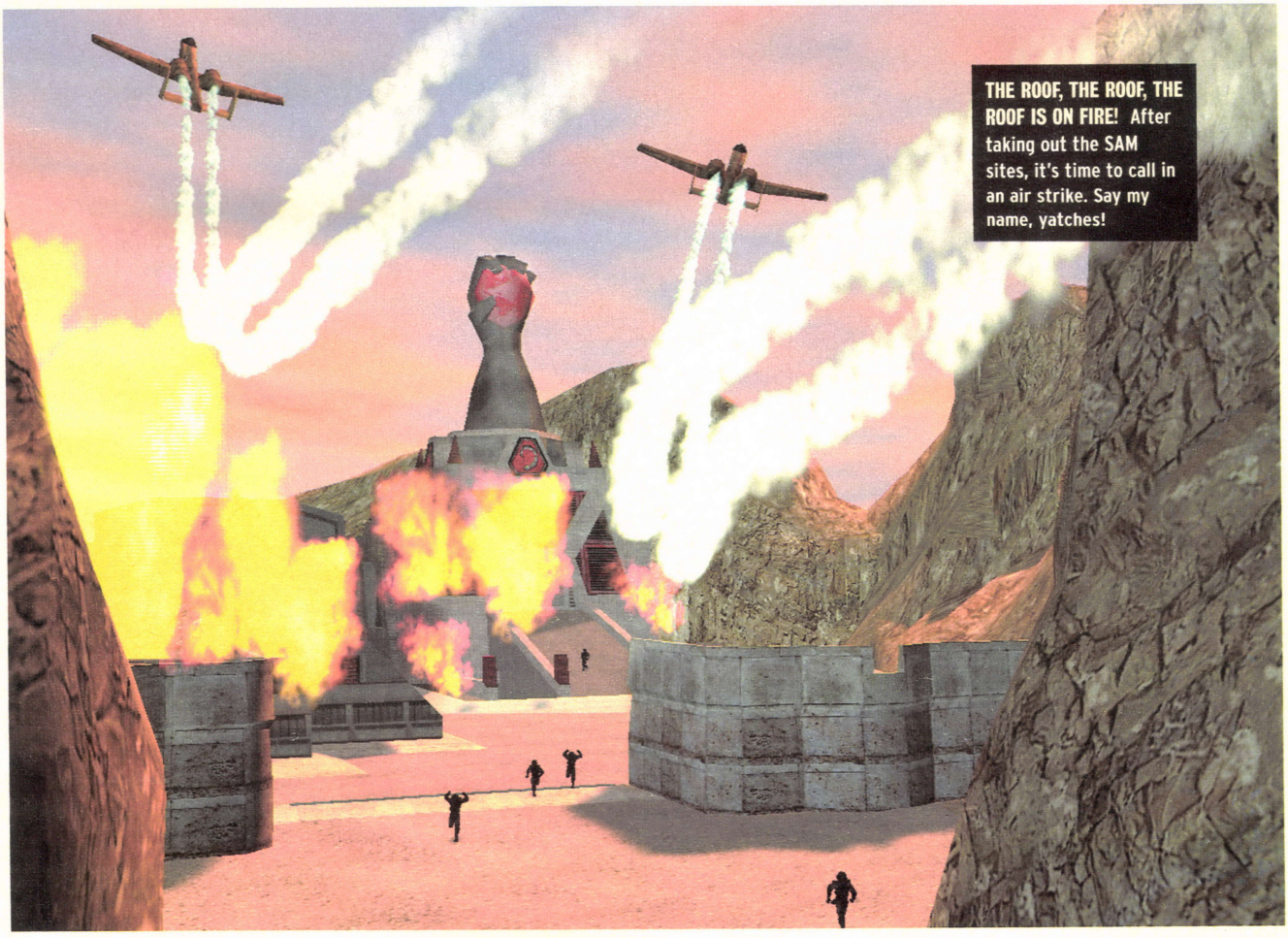
**Westwood has consistently toyed around with new ways to exploit its lucrative *Command & Conquer (C&C)* franchise. From the ill-fated *Sole Survivor* to the best-selling *Tiberian Sun*, the *C&C* universe offers plenty of room for myriad interpretations.**

*By William O'Neal*

Anyone who's ever played a *C&C* title couldn't help but wonder what the action on the ground was like – and that's where *Renegade* comes in. Playing the game from the perspective of the GDI's tough-as-nails commando, you won't be commanding any units in *Renegade*, but you will be working your ass off in solo missions as you go about the daunting task of defeating the NOD.

One thing that often detracts from the quality of games based on popular franchises is the assumption that the gamer has prior knowledge. Westwood is hoping to avoid this mistake. Michael Ward, the game's producer, elaborates: "We're trying to make this game such that prior knowledge of *C&C* is not required. If you don't know anything about *C&C*, you'll be able to jump in and figure out what you're supposed to do." Westwood has created *Renegade* in such a way that it should appeal to people who are familiar with *C&C* too. "If you are a *C&C* fan, though, then a lot about this game will look familiar to you," says Ward.

*Renegade*'s storyline weaves in and out with that of the original *C&C*, as it takes place around the same time frame. "If you recall from the original *C&C*, there was a moment when Doctor Ignatio Mobius was kidnapped. That factors into *Renegade*'s storyline as well," says Ward. In other words, *Renegade*'s plotlines are parallel to those of the original *C&C*, and they will overlap at certain points. In addition to Mobius, *Renegade* will feature a bevy of new characters, one of the more interesting of whom is the appropriately busty and scantily clad Sakura Obata, a former Yakuza enforcer, spy, and



**THE ROOF, THE ROOF, THE ROOF IS ON FIRE!** After taking out the SAM sites, it's time to call in an air strike. Say my name, yatches!

assassin for hire. (Hello, my future girlfriend.) Westwood is keeping a tight reign on information regarding many of the game's characters, but you can expect them to factor into the plotlines.

Beyond a simple action translation of the *C&C* universe, Westwood is proud of *Renegade* on a technological level as well. Ward explains, "One of the cool things about our engine is that you can see vast distances. With the sniper scope, for instance, you can zoom in and pick up targets that are pretty far away."

Beyond its use as a long-range weapon, the sniper scope will be able to pick up audio from across long distances as well. The creators have also developed methods for loading entire maps into memory, thereby eliminating the need for annoying-as-hell load times.

According to Louis Castle, Westwood's cofounder and executive vice president, the thinking behind this design decision



**COME ON, BABY! JUST DO THE TWIST** In both third- and first-person modes, the *Renegade* commando can pivot at the waist. Don't worry, Westwood assures us this won't be anything like Sega's *Vigilance* debacle.



**SAY HELLO TO MY LITTLE FRIEND**
Our commando friend packs a bitchin' arsenal.



**WHAT'S THAT JANKY-ASS SMELL?** That'd be the smell of a dead NOD's intestines rotting in the sun after I pepper him with about 500,000 rounds of ammo from my fully automatic peace maker.

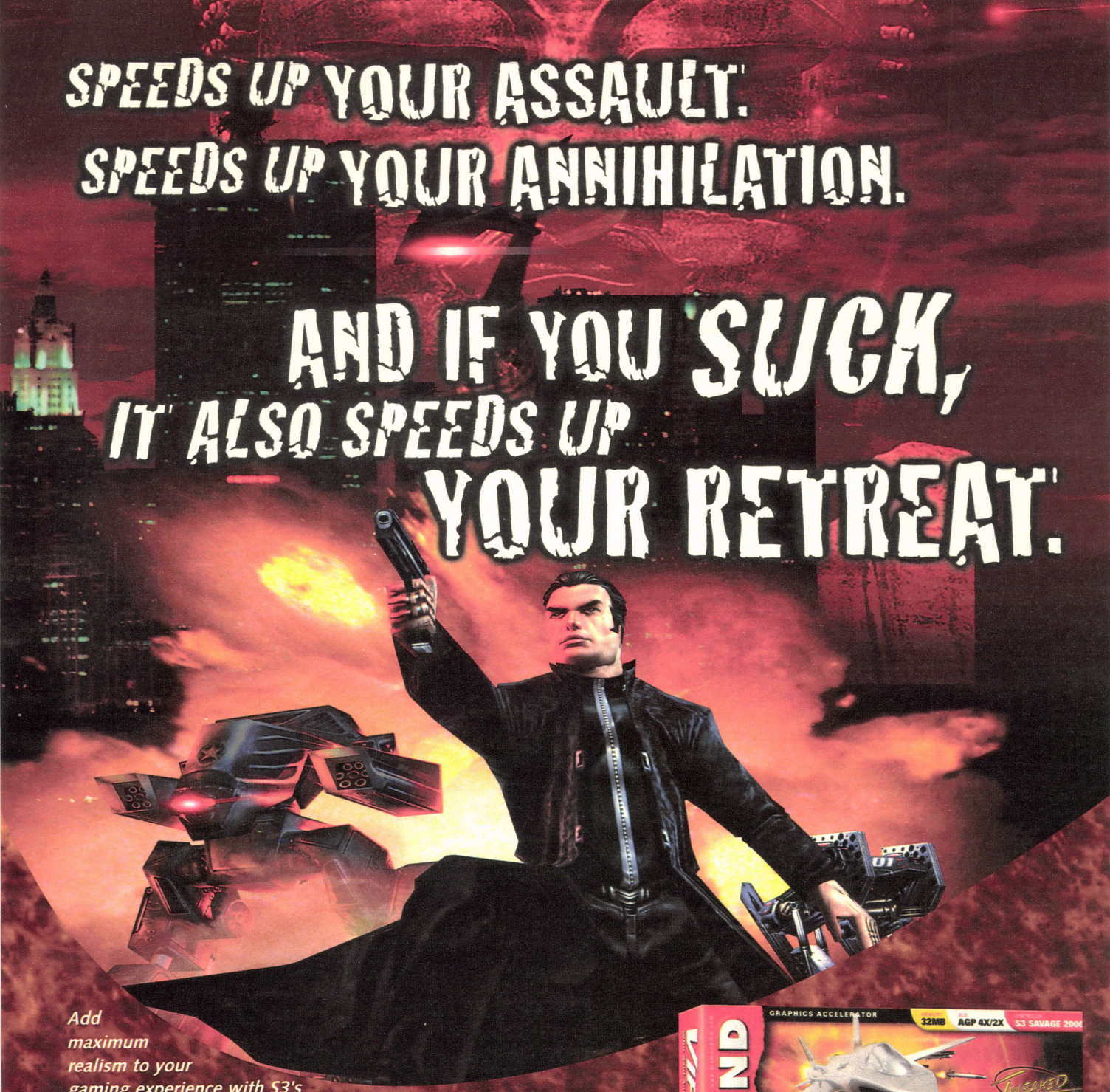
was that from a strategy background, players of *C&C* titles are used to being able to view the entire arena they happen to be playing in.

Sticking with its theme of being *C&C* on the ground, in *Renegade* players will often be required to pilot any number of the vehicles that populate the *C&C* universe. Ever wanted to drive a NOD buggy? Well, here's your chance. The same holds true for the rocket bike, the Humvee, the Orca (a GDI-designed attack vehicle), and the Apache gunship. "Most of the vehicles have some sort of weapon on them, too. During multiplayer games one guy can be in the driver's seat and one guy can be in the passenger's seat. And the passenger can control the weapon while the driver controls the vehicle," says Ward. In single-player games players will control both.

Of course, *Renegade* will sport the requisite first-person-shooter-

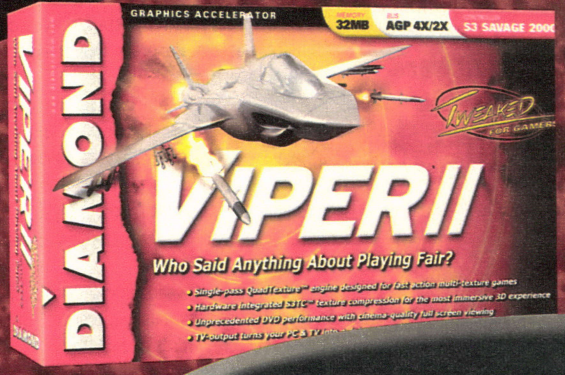
# SPEEDS UP YOUR ASSAULT.
# SPEEDS UP YOUR ANNIHILATION.

# AND IF YOU SUCK,
# IT ALSO SPEEDS UP YOUR RETREAT.



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style multiplayer modes. But it will also boast a new mode: C&C, where players can compete as GDI versus NOD, and base assaults will factor prominently. Says Ward, "You'll have base buildings and all that. But we're going to be careful not to let it turn into an RTS." In C&C mode the bases will function as consistently as they do in the *C&C* universe, which means gamers won't encounter any unfamiliar – and unwelcome – surprises. "You'll have harvesters gathering resources, and you can configure it yourself. If you want to make one of your buddies drive a harvester, you can do that," says Ward.

Staying true to the *C&C* universe is the most important aspect of the game, say most gamers we've talked to. Luckily for everyone, Westwood has gone to great lengths to give players of *Renegade* the feeling that they're actually in the *C&C* universe. And from the looks of things, they've done a pretty good job. From the *C&C*-style mission objectives to the familiar symbols, lovers of *C&C* should feel right at home – that is, until the bullets start flying.

As they say, waiting is the hardest part, and gamers will be in agony until *Renegade* finally ships during the Christmas season. Westwood, for its part, is promising to hold off releasing the product until it's absolutely ready. As much as it hurts to wait, we have to agree that this is the best course of action, judging from past releases that seemed, shall we say, a little... rushed.

Here's hoping Westwood comes through and gives gamers the ultimate *Command & Conquer* experience with *Renegade*.



**SAKURA**

**What's her deal?** She will be the megahot vixen in charge of getting your back in *Renegade*. Her background is supersecret, but rumor has it that she was raised in a brutal crime organization called the Yakuza. Simply put, she's one tough cookie!

WELCOME TO THE NEW GAMING REVOLUTION

## C&C ON MICROSOFT'S X-BOX?

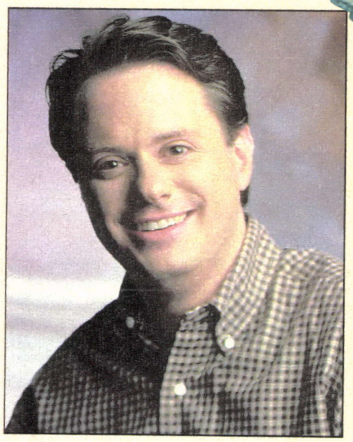
Westwood co-founder and Executive Vice President **Louis Castle** speaks candidly about Microsoft's X-Box and the future of PC gaming

**"It's very dangerous to assume that because I can build software for the X-Box, it must be the right place to build software."**

A self-proclaimed old-timer, Louis Castle admits he likes what he's heard about Microsoft's X-Box. Nevertheless, he's "concerned about who the consumer is and how good Microsoft's going to be at targeting that consumer." He also harbors a few reservations about Microsoft's abilities to get the hardware into the hands of the gamers the software leviathan is trying to reach. "Manufacturing is certainly an issue, as is distribution. Sure, Microsoft is incredible at software distribution, but hardware distribution is a little different. Even though they do peripherals, they're all computer-based peripherals. They're not consumer electronics."

While there's no "official" word on what kind of publication model Microsoft is going to pursue with the X-Box, it has stated it is going to have publishing models similar to other consoles. And, says Castle, "they're radically different than the publishing model for the PC."

All in all, Castle describes his position on the X-Box as "cautiously optimistic." But he also has some words of caution to developers whose excitement over the new platform may lead them to get a bit ahead of themselves. "I would caution people from very quickly trying to change their efforts from PC development to the X-Box development thinking that they'll just take



these PC guys and make 'em do the X-Box titles. It's a different consumer that sits in front of their television – even if it's the same physical person. They're not looking for the same kind of entertainment experience. So it's very dangerous to assume that because I can build software for the X-Box, it must be the right place to build software," says Castle.

Ultimately, Castle believes having the ability to crank out tons of content in an inappropriate market is not going to serve a new console system well, and that "there are a lot of challenges to come, and they're not even technological ones."

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# The Witching Hour

No broomsticks or black cats – these three **BLAIR WITCH** games plan to have the really scary stuff

■ PUBLISHER **Gathering of Developers** ■ DEVELOPER **Terminal Reality; Human Head Studios; Ritual Entertainment** ■ GENRE **Adventure; survival horror; action** ■ PLAYERS **1** ■ RELEASE DATE **Q3 2000**

**INSIGHT**

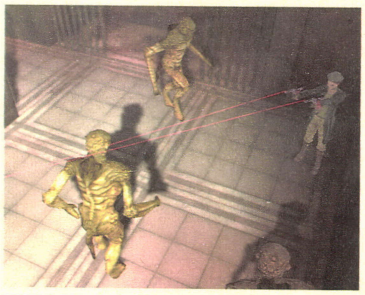
**Q. Will the games have a shaky cam?**
**A.** No way. Talk about getting sick...
**Q. Will the games be as scary as the movie?**
**A.** You thought the movie was scary? Wuss.
**Q. Will we finally get to actually see the Blair Witch?**
**A.** You'll have to play the games to find out!

**There seems to be something special about threes. From the cabala to the Holy Trinity, three has long been a potent number. And now it's the number of the Blair Witch: three different developers, three different games, and three different releases in three different months.**

*By Moira Muldoon*



**LIKE DAY AND NOCTURNE** Look familiar? That's not *Nocturne*'s Stranger, though.



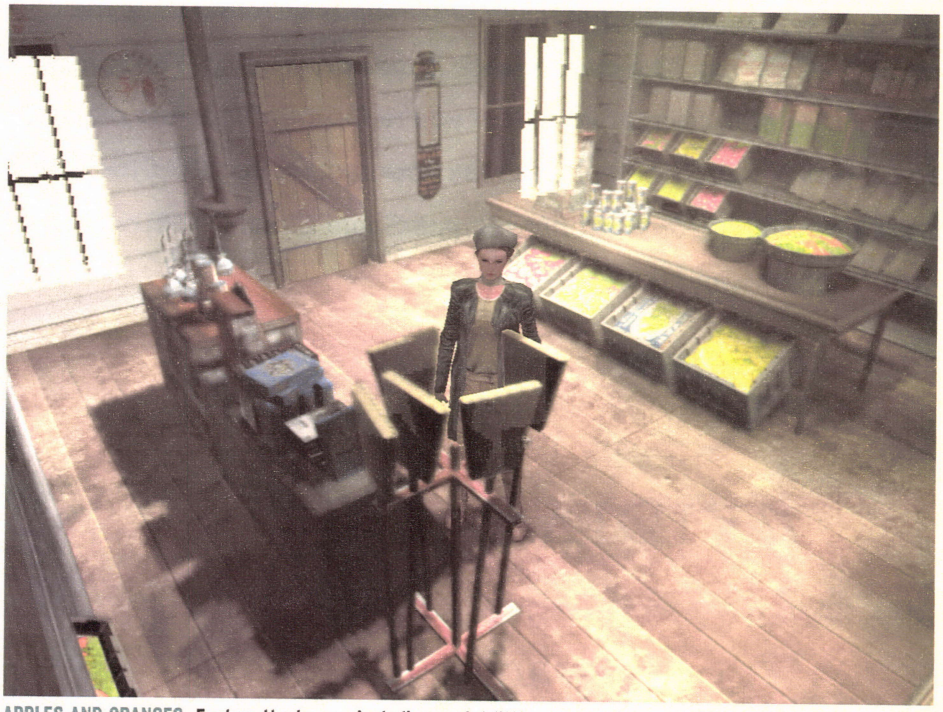
**TOUCH MY TAIL** Yeah, I'll touch it with my gun, you bony freak.

## In the Beginning – Blair Witch Volume 1: Rustin Parr

Rustin Parr murdered several young children, torturing and killing them in a dilapidated shack out in the woods. Parr admits to the grisly deaths but he says he's not entirely to blame: An old ghostly witch was the impetus behind the murders, he says. She made him do it.

Tales of that witch, and of strange supernatural happenings in that area, draw you in. You are Doc Holliday, sidekick to the Stranger in Terminal Reality's *Nocturne*. Those who played *Nocturne* will remember that Doc and the Stranger worked for Spookhouse and investigated paranormal activities. Now you're playing as Doc, and it's time to figure out just what exactly is up with the town of Burkittsville.

That's the opening of the first game in the three-part series based on *The Blair Witch Project* that Gathering of Developers will be publishing in the fall. All the games are based on the *Nocturne* engine, all the games are being designed with the help of Haxan (the maker of the movie), all the games' dialogue is being scripted by the same writer, and all the games tie into each other in subtle and none-too-subtle ways. Expect characters from one game to make appearances in the others, and the final game will even explain some things about all three – providing you finish all three, of course. Each game will stand alone, however, with its own time period, plotline, characters, mysteries, and challenges. Each one also is in a slightly different genre.



**APPLES AND ORANGES** Explore the town – including quaint little grocery shops – in *Blair Witch Volume 1: Rustin Parr*. All three *Blair Witch* games will use the *Nocturne* engine, so expect an insane level of detail.

The first, being developed by Terminal Reality, is an action/adventure game. Beautiful and dark, *Rustin Parr* is set in the 1940s. You'll have to do all the usual things, such as talk to folks around town, solve a few puzzles, and research past investigations into the town. You'll also have a few weapons – a 9mm Luger, a big pistol with a gigantic silencer on it – which is important, as Doc "is usually an investigator, dealing with people," says Jeff Mills, senior designer at Terminal Reality. "She chooses that weapon so that she doesn't draw attention to herself." Contrary to what the screenshots might indicate, she'll normally use only one pistol.

But you'll definitely need a weapon, as the game will sport a host of creepy beasts. Initially, supernatural beings are detectable only with a special gadget (the Spectral Proximity Sensor, or SPS). As you progress and get a better sense of what's going on, however,

**PERFECT FORMATION** Those naughty monsters don't even know enough to step out of the laser light.

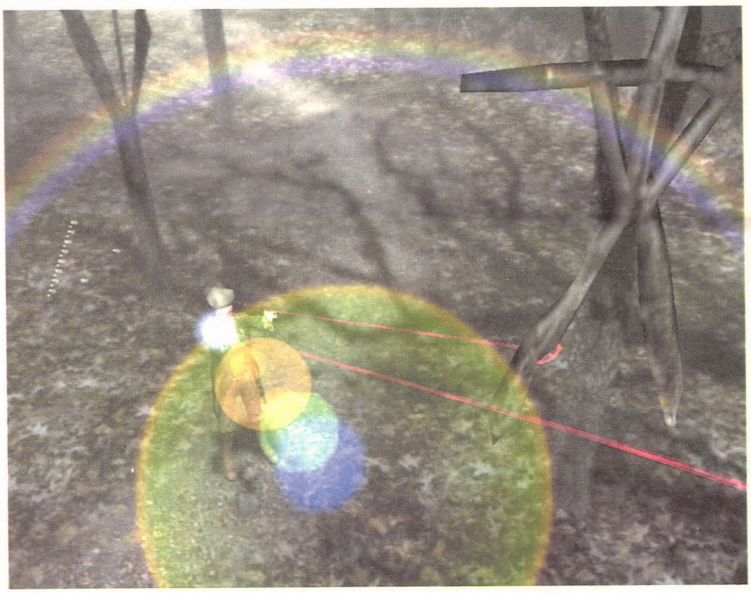
you'll have a much easier time detecting the beasts, many of which have been drawn from actual Burkittsville legends.

You'll find yourself in full control of just how much action is in the game. There will be easier and harder settings for both the puzzle and action elements of the game, meaning you can determine whether *Volume 1* is more a true adventure game (hard puzzle, easy action) or more an action-oriented adventure game (hard action, easy puzzle). Either way, the crux of the game is about uncovering what exactly happened with Rustin Parr, the murders, and who's really behind it all.

**You'll definitely need a weapon, as the game will sport a host of creepy beasts.**

### Part *Deux* — Volume 2: Coffin Rock

If the first episode will have a little more exploration than action, the



**IN THE STILL OF THE LIGHT** You can see a lot more with your flashlight: really scary monsters and witches that want to kill you, for example.

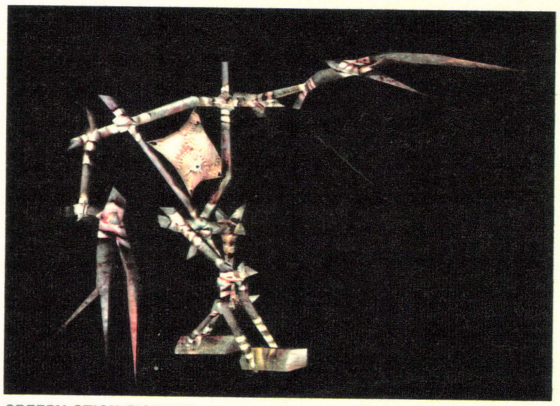
**OH, BABY, TALK TO ME** Like lovers do. Or at least help me figure out what the hell is going on.

second will balance the two well. *Blair Witch Volume 2: Coffin Rock,* being developed by Human Head Studios, is all survival horror. Like the *Resident Evil* series, in *Volume 2* things will jump out at you, scare you, and set your trigger finger in motion. You'll still have a handful of puzzles to solve and things to figure out, but this is straightforward, linear gameplay – and it's supposed to be scary.

The game's opening is plenty mysterious, if not downright creepy. You awake alone in a forest, uncertain of where you are. Last you knew, you were a Union solider in the middle of the Civil War, and now all you know is that you have a head wound and are in pain. A little girl finds you and takes you to her grandmother – a woman gifted with a touch of the second sight – and the two christen you Lazarus and begin caring for you. Shortly thereafter the little girl, Robin Weaver, disappears, and the grandmother charges you with finding her. In the process of seeking her out, you also find yourself and your past and battle the evil that abducted Robin in the first place.

All the plotlines for the stories are being tracked carefully against the lore of the filmmakers' Blair Witch, and all the developers are working closely with Haxan to ensure that the back-stories and characters mesh perfectly with what's planned for the film prequel and sequel, as well as with the original movie. This episode takes place in 1886 and is all about Coffin Rock, as that's where the search party that was sent out looking for Robin Weaver met its doom.

Like *Volume 1, Coffin Rock* will be based on the *Nocturne* engine, with lush graphics and stunning details. At the moment the game is still very early on in development, but it should be plenty dark and creepy by the time it heads to store shelves this Halloween. "We're going for the scare ride," says Timothy Gerritsen, business development director at Human Head Studios. "We're going to throw stuff at you and try to scare the crap out of you, then calm you down, then throw something at you to scare the crap out of you."



**CREEPY STICK FIGURES** *Nocturne*'s engine is perfect for making stick-figure creatures like this one from *Volume 2.*

**Developers work closely with Haxan to ensure that the games mesh perfectly.**

### And Then There Were Three

Just in time for Thanksgiving will come *Volume 3.* In a time when



**THE HOUSE OF THE SPIRITS** **Rustin Parr killed little kids here; was a witch forcing his hand? It will be up to you to find out the real answers to the Blair Witch mysteries in all three games.**

***Volume 3* is more an action game than anything else, with potent beasts to conquer, spells to cast, and new worlds to discover.**

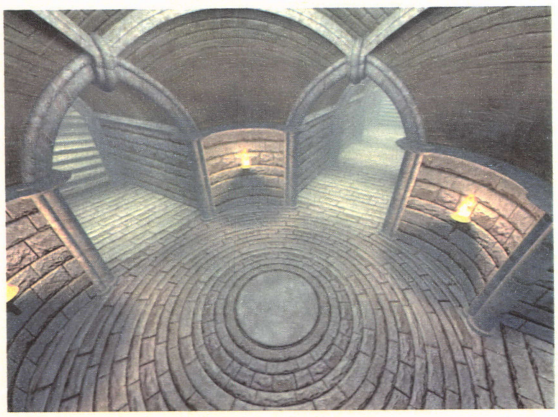
people still spoke with "thee"s and "thou"s (1785), Elly Kedward was accused of being a witch. After he is convicted and banished from the town of Blair (later renamed Burkittsville), strange things begin happening, and the town clears out. By the time witch hunter Jonathan Prye – the character you play – arrives, few people are left, and most aren't too chatty.

*Volume 3* is more an action game than anything else, with potent beasts to conquer, spells to cast, and exotically enough, new worlds to discover. "We're trying to differentiate ourselves [from the other *Blair Witch* games] in a couple of different ways," says Ritual's Jon Galloway, the lead on the project. "One, the weaponry of the 18th century is very limiting, so we're going to go for more of a spell-based combat system." Also, Prye, the witch hunter, learns some of the tricks of the trade, so to speak, from three powerful characters along the way.

Hale, the priest; Whis-can, the Indian shaman; and Elizabeth Styler, a reputed witch, each teach Prye his or her own brand of magic and how to use the various religious artifacts and talismans that come into play.

For example, "the shaman will teach you how to access the hidden powers of the talisman, which are similar in power to the Twana," says Galloway. (The Twana are the stick figures.) And Styler, who's being held in prison, will be the one to teach you all about pagan magic. Thus armed with pagan, Indian, and Christian magic, you may well be ready to take on the evil that lurks in the forest.

In *Volume 3* you'll also do some traveling to other more mysterious and frightening realms, though what those realms are and how they'll affect gameplay remains shrouded in mystery – and likely will until the game's release.



**INTERIORS** ***Volume 3* is still in the earliest of stages, but here's a glimpse at what the game's interiors will look like.**



**THOUGHT WE'D USE THE NOSE PHOTO, DIDN'T YA?**

## BLAIR WITCH 2

The **final *Blair Witch* game and the movie sequel** are due out this Halloween

The storyline and details of *Blair Witch 2*, which is due out this fall, are being kept seriously hush-hush; only tiny tidbits are being trailed like breadcrumbs through a dark wood. What we do know is that *Blair Witch 2* will return to **Burkittsville,** a place that has been haunted for years and years by stories about the Blair Witch. This time a handful of kids at a Boston college see *The Blair Witch Project* and decide to go to Burkittsville to find out what really happened to the original three filmmakers.

Documentary maker **Joe Berlinger** is set to direct *Blair Witch 2*, and he's no stranger to filming bad things happening to kids: He's best known for directing ***Paradise Lost: The Child Murders at Robin Hood Hills,*** the documentary on three child murders and the seemingly innocent toughs who get accused – and convicted – of committing them.

Jon Bokenkamp and Neal Stevens are writing the script for *Blair Witch 2*, with helpful input from Daniel Myrick and Eduardo Sanchez, who directed the original *Blair Witch Project*. Rumor has it that Myrick and Sanchez are only consulting on this one because they're too busy working on No. 3, due out in 2001.

### Wrap It Up

September, October, November – those are the dates of the games' releases, one tumbling into stores headlong after another, almost like an old-fashioned serial spun out over days and weeks in a newspaper or a three-part miniseries. Either way, what is clear is that the games have one foot firmly in the *Blair Witch* film universe and one in the gaming universe. And maybe, just maybe, that means they'll be able to stand tall in our universe this fall.

# Digital Brickyard

## NASCAR HEAT from Hasbro Interactive — is this the same company that made Monopoly?

■ PUBLISHER **Hasbro Interactive** ■ DEVELOPER **Monster Games** ■ GENRE **Racing** ■ PLAYERS **1-8** ■ RELEASE DATE **Q3 2000**

**INSIGHT**

**Q. Is Cole Trickle one of the game's featured drivers? I sure would like to race him.**

**A.** Um...Cole Trickle (Tom Cruise's character in *Days of Thunder*) will not be in the game.

**Q. Will *NASCAR Heat* feature any truck races?**

**A.** No.

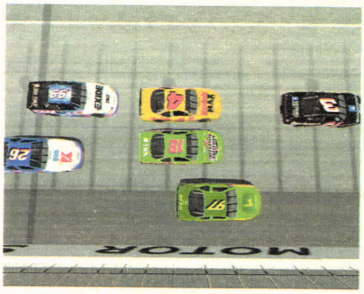
**It's easy to think of NASCAR as the professional wrestling of motor sports. In fact, it's so popular these days, you'd think WWF promoter Vince McMahon was at work behind the scenes.**

***By William O'Neal***

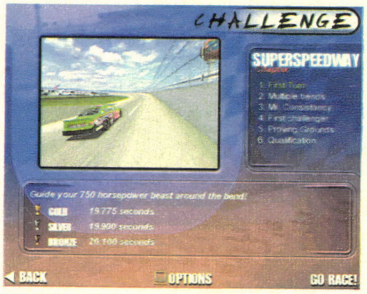
*NASCAR Heat* looks to combine the popularity of NASCAR racing with unique gameplay in a package that'll have racing fans flocking to their PCs. To that end, while most NASCAR games boast the same features (single race and championship), the folks at Hasbro have added some new and interesting gameplay modes that promise to keep us five-point-strapped to our seats.

Says Ed Martin, the game's executive producer, "NASCAR fans want to get out there and race fender to fender, door to door with Dale Earnhardt and Jeff Gordon." In other words, Hasbro hopes *NASCAR Heat*'s artificial intelligence will enable beginning racers to hang with the big boys.

During races the game will dynamically adjust the strength of your computer-controlled opponents. For instance, as you begin working your way through the pack, cars you've passed won't just fall way behind. "Once you get through, they're on you like sharks on blood and coming at you the whole time," says Martin.



**LOOKING FOR THE REAL KILLERS?** The overhead replay, a.k.a. the "O.J. Cam."




**YOUR MISSION** In this challenge you have to get around the bend in 20 seconds.

In an attempt to differentiate this title from all the other racers out there, Hasbro's game has two new modes in addition to the old standbys: Beat the Heat and Race the Pro. Beat the Heat will feature mission-based racing in which you're dropped into the middle of specific scenarios.

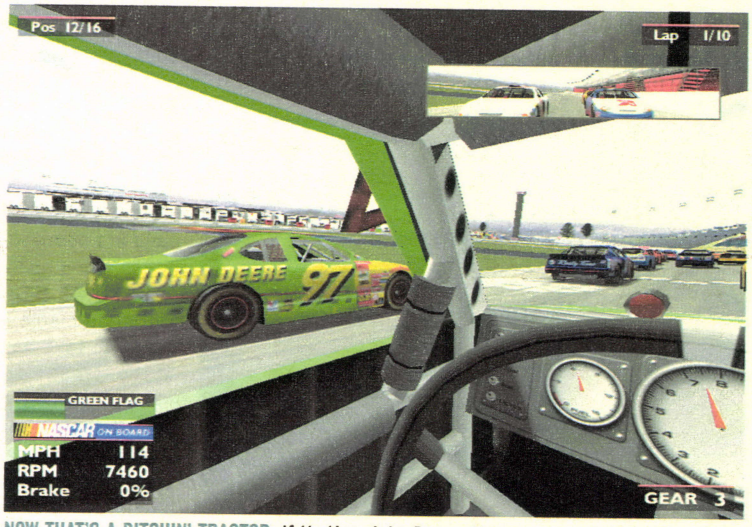
"We don't want you to race the Daytona 500; we want you to race the Daytona 5, where the last five miles of that race is white-knuckled, holy-crap, dash-to-the-finish-line, my-tires-are-worn-to-the bone, I-don't-have-any-gas-but dammit-I-gotta-win-this-race type of racing," says Martin.

In *NASCAR Heat*'s Beat the Heat challenges you'll compete for bronze, silver, or gold trophies. If you get at least bronze in all of the first level of 36 challenges, you'll unlock another level set up by Dale Earnhardt Jr. Do even better than that and you'll unlock an even tougher challenge. (But you'll have to play the game yourself to find out about that one.) NASCAR drivers will play key roles in the game's challenges, and a dozen of the challenges will even have driver videos in which a driver will lay out the challenge for you.

For Race the Pro, Hasbro gave copies of the game to Winston Cup drivers such as Bobby Labonte and




**NOT A GOOD DAY** When I said I wanted to fly to North Carolina for the race, I didn't quite have this in mind.




**NOW THAT'S A BITCHIN' TRACTOR** If that's a John Deere, then my name is Susan Lucci. Don't worry, he'll be back to plowing corn fields after I blow by him for the win.

Ted Musgrave. While the drivers played the game, Hasbro automatically recorded their best laps. It then gathered those laps and put them in the final game. You can race against a ghost-car image of the lap these Winston Cup drivers really drove.

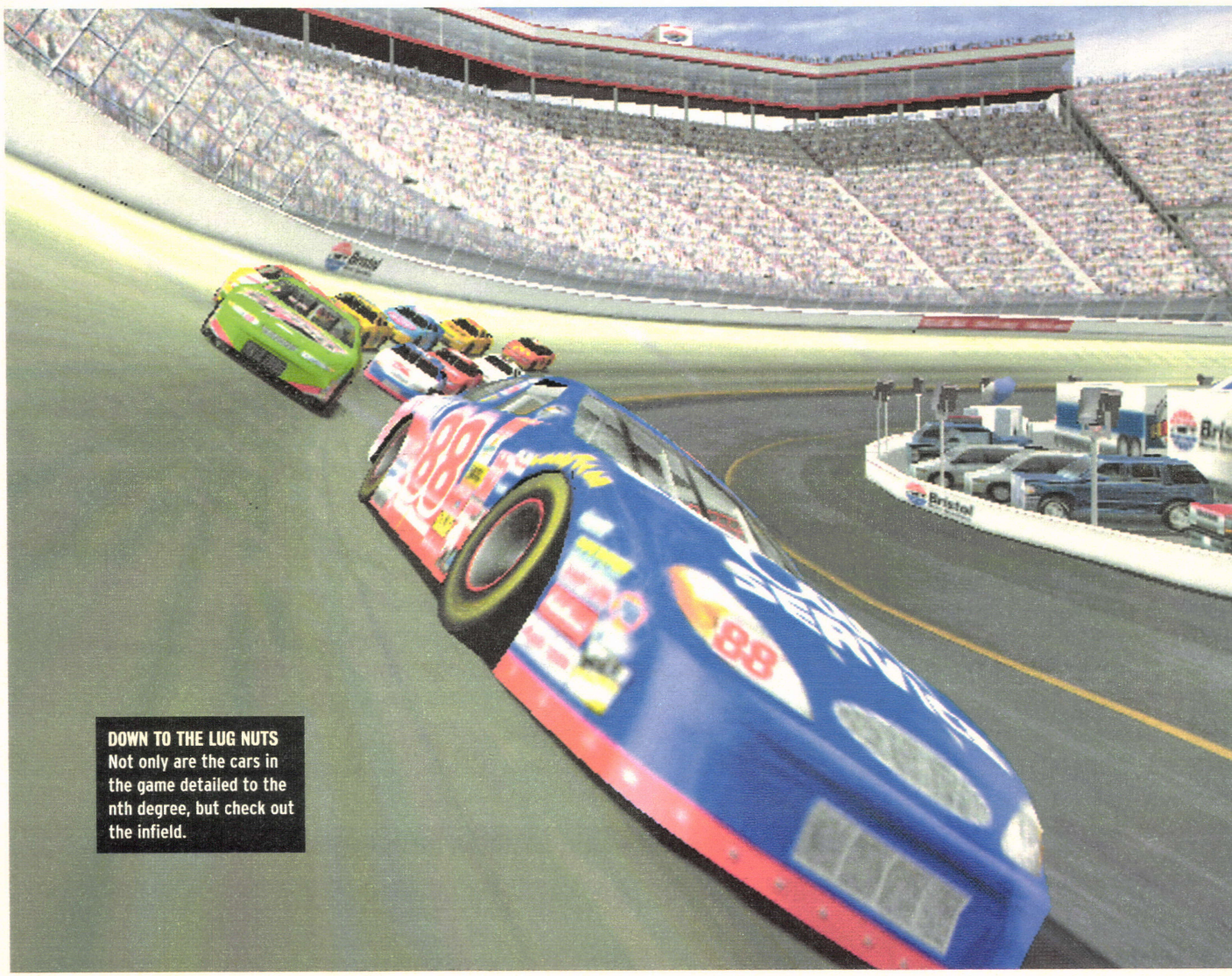
"Race the Pro will also be the ultimate tutorial, because you've got a Winston Cup driver on the track with you. You sit anybody down at this game and start up Race the Pro, and within three or four laps they're gonna be following that guy's line around the track," says Martin.

The game will feature 29 real NASCAR drivers. Hasbro expects to have at least a dozen of them available in Race the Pro. You can expect to lose a lot until you get in some serious practice.

**"NASCAR fans want to get out there and race fender to fender, door to door with Dale Earnhardt and Jeff Gordon."**




**IN THEIR PLACE!** When you're in front, the competition is on you like stink on... old cheese? (Give me a break; this is a family magazine.)




**DOWN TO THE LUG NUTS** Not only are the cars in the game detailed to the nth degree, but check out the infield.

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EVERYONE E CONTENT RATED BY ESRB
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# Boob Tubes

What makes Ubi Soft think it can make a decent game based on **V.I.P.?** Two words: Pamela Anderson

■ PUBLISHER **Ubi Soft** ■ DEVELOPER **Kalisto Entertainment** ■ GENRE **Action/adventure** ■ PLAYERS **1** ■ RELEASE DATE **Q4 2000**

**INSIGHT**

**Q. Will Pamela Anderson provide voice-overs?**
**A.** Yes. But, really, you don't think anyone will be listening to her voice, do you?
**Q. How come I can never figure out when the TV show comes on?**
**A.** Because it's a syndicated series, *V.I.P.* airs on different channels and at different times depending on where you live. Check those local listings, slacker.
**Q. Will there be lots of T&A?**
**A.** It's based on a TV show loaded with sex appeal. And it's being developed in France. You do the math.

**Some licenses are just too lucrative to pass up: *Star Wars, Star Trek, The Dukes of Hazzard.* Which makes us wonder why have companies consistently passed up the oh-so-golden opportunity to make games based on past Pamela Anderson roles – like in *Baywatch* and *Barb Wire?***

***By Gary Eng Walk***

Ubi Soft has hooked up with America's favorite trophy wife, and it is hard at work on *V.I.P.*, a game that has the potential to be the best TV-licensed game ever. The hard part, though, will be unleashing that potential.

Chances are, you've never played a Ubi Soft game, and even if you have, it was on a PlayStation, not on the PC. Unlike its solid success in the console biz, Ubi Soft's past performance in the PC market is hardly the envy of the industry. The company has bet heavily – and lost – on racing titles such as *S.C.A.R.S., F1 Racing Simulation,* and *POD.* Even its most recent A-plus title, *Rayman 2,* wasn't the runaway hit it deserved to be. That makes *V.I.P.* a Very Important Product for Ubi Soft – one that could determine the fate of the company's future development on the PC.



**WHAT'S WITH THE PIXELS?** **Athough these are PlayStation shots, they give a pretty good representation of what the PC game will look like. Just imagine about a million more polys.**

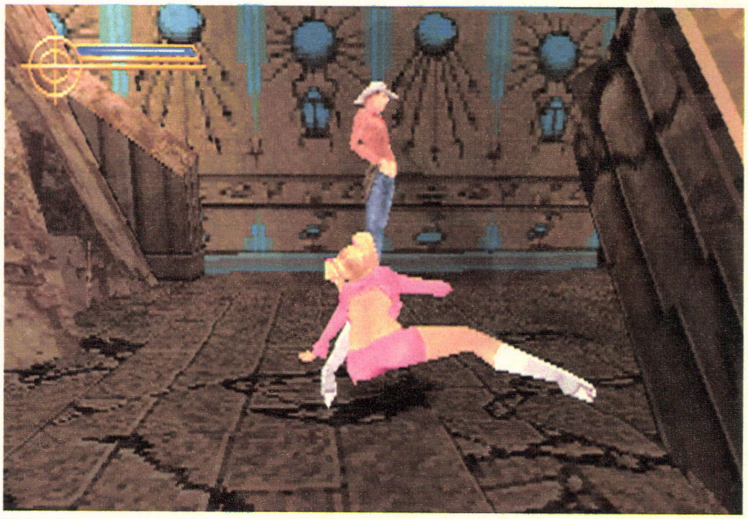
If any game is up to this task, it's *V.I.P.* Unlike *Rayman,* it's a perfect match for PC gaming's older audience. Six million people watch the syndicated show each week – and we're betting few of them play *Mario Party.* "We're trying to respect the TV series' spirit to its maximum potential," says Producer Valerie Beaufils. This, to quote Martha Stewart, is a good thing, because if you're at all familiar with the show, you already know it oozes a distinctive blend of action, humor, spunkiness, and, of course, gratuitous cleavage.

### *Parlez-Vous V.I.P.?*

French-based Kalisto Entertainment (maker of *Nightmare Creatures)* is



**CAN-TANKEROUS** **Pixels and all, it's easy to see the main attraction for the less mature *V.I.P.* fans out there.**



**THE SPLIT** **Val will use all her feminine wiles to guard the celebrities under her charge. And if that doesn't work, she's always got her guns!**



**SMILE FOR THE CAMERA** This bad guy had better get ready to fight, as it might be his last minute to live.

developing the game, which begs the question, "How can a European company hope to accurately translate a positively American TV show into an engaging PC game?" The answer is lots of studying, explains Beaufils: "I've seen the show, of course. It's broadcast in France. Sony Pictures also provided us with the episodes from seasons one and two to understand the general spirit of the show." Kalisto is also in possession of "the *V.I.P.* bible,"a thick tome that came courtesy of the TV producers and gives meticulous details about the series continuity and characters' personalities.

**If you're at all familiar with the show, you already know it oozes a distinctive blend of action, humor, spunkiness, and, of course, gratuitous cleavage.**

## Pam and Friends

*V.I.P.* is a third-person, mission-based, 3D adventure game that centers around the escapades of Pamela Anderson's character, Vallery Irons, and her celebrity-bodyguard-for-hire agency. You play Val throughout the game, leaving the rest of the cast – including series costars Molly Culver, Natalie Raitano, Leah Lail, Shaun Baker, and Dustin Nguyen – who are working with Beaufils and her team on the game – to supporting roles.

As expected, Val isn't afraid to bust the occasional cap in a bad guy's ass. Still, don't expect a constant barrage of bullets. Val also needs to run, hide, and make use of all sorts of gadgets. For example, Leah Lail's character – the geek/babe computer hacker (think James Bond's Q, but with T&A) – provides Val with a makeup kit that renders her invisible. Val and her fellow bodyguards are also armed with *V.I.P.*'s trademark wisecracks, so expect plenty of wince-inducing jokes in the game as well.

## Don't Call It Tomb Raider

Guns, babes, sardonic dialogue...wait a cotton-pickin' minute: Haven't we seen this before? *Tomb Raider,* perhaps, and to a lesser extent, *Leisure Suit Larry?* But Beaufils is confident that *V.I.P.* can stand on its own.

"The game will actually reflect the humorous and second-degree elements of the show. That's an important advantage for us and will make a real difference from *Tomb Raider,*" says Beaufils.

Then there's the game's most important "asset." It doesn't take a genius to see that its not-so-secret weapon is Ms. Anderson. Since Pamela makes Lara Croft look flatter than Laura Ingalls from *Little House on the Prairie,* despite the disadvantage of being a living, breathing woman as opposed to being an impossibly proportioned product of horny programmers' imaginations, it's obvious that she'll make an ideal video game character. What's more, since she's got a lot of input into the direction the game is taking, Pamela is sure to make sure her character uses her brains as much as her bust.

## Polygons in All The Right Places

"We're doing our best to reproduce her precisely and to make her look very sexy," says Beaufils, "Her 3D model is made of more than 750 polygons." *Mon dieu!*

To give the game even more joie de vivre, *V.I.P.*'s designers are instilling the gameplay with a TV show-style level design. The game unfolds into four self-contained mini-episodes. During each episode, Pamela Anderson's character has a different star to guard and, Beaufils says proudly, "a different outfit." It's a good thing the French know a little something about fashion. Let's hope they're even better at game design. Look for *V.I.P.* to make its way to store shelves around Christmas this year.



**BEHIND YOU!** Jim never saw his jilted lover, Jorge, until it was too late.



**CHARLIE'S ANGELS?** Not quite. These are the famous *V.I.P.* girls. The Angels never had this kind of firepower... and even if they did, they wouldn't have the *cojones* to use it. The *V.I.P.* girls don't have that problem.



# ACTION FIGURE

BY PAUL SEMEL
PHOTOGRAPHY BY STEPHEN WAYDA/CORBIS OUTLINE

## With a *V.I.P.* game in the works, you're finally going to get your chance to play with **Pamela Anderson**

**It's not often that you get to mess around with a famous actress. Actually, it never happens, even if you're very, very lucky. But with a number of upcoming video games being based on TV shows and movies, some of the most notable lady thespians in Hollywood will soon be placing their lives in the hands of gamers. Well, their digital lives anyway.**

While gamers will certainly get a thrill from controlling *Buffy The Vampire Slayer*'s Sarah Michelle Gellar, *Relic Hunter's* Tia Carerre, or *Star Trek Voyager's* Jeri Ryan in their respective games, there's probably no actress around whom gamers would like to get their hands on more than Pamela Anderson. This, however, won't just be wishful thinking for the lonely much longer, as Pam's hit TV show, *V.I.P.*, is being developed into a game by the good people at Ubi Soft.

**"At *Baywatch* I was a hired hand. *V.I.P.* is my vision... I have a big part in every decision."**

The game – which, while action-oriented, is expected to have the same tongue-in-cheek flavor as the show – lets you play as Pam's character, faux bodyguard Vallery Irons. Just like in the show, your character will use weapons and gadgets to protect people. And while Pam does admit, "I'm not the type to sit and play video games," she is taking as active a role in the development of the game as she does in the show (which she also executive produces) and will provide the voice of Vallery.

**Where did the original idea for *V.I.P.* come from? Did you make it up, or did someone else?**

[Co-Executive Producer] Jonathan Lawton and I got together and collaborated. But I made up the "fish out of water" element; I didn't want to do a serious, straight show.

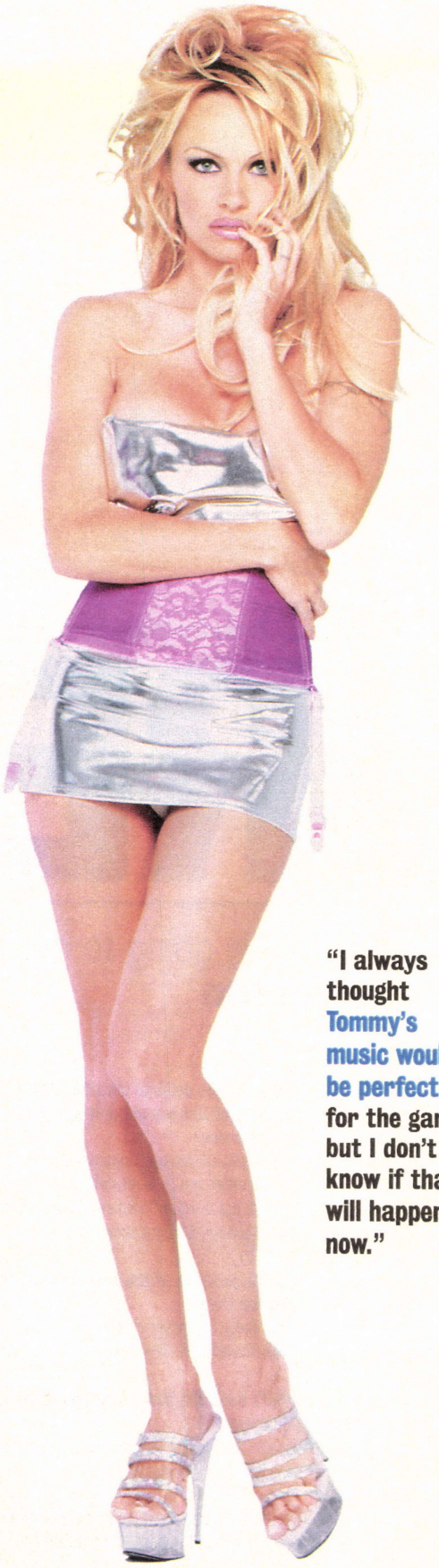
**Has the premise of the show changed at all since then?**

The premise has never changed; I just think we've worked out a few kinks.

**What's been the best thing about doing the show?**

Having the freedom to really do what I want to do and what entertains me.

**I've heard that some celebrities have gone to great lengths to be guests on the show. What's the best one of these**



**"I always thought Tommy's music would be perfect for the game, but I don't know if that will happen now."**

**you've heard of so far?**
Da Brat gave us 50,000 phone numbers of how to reach her.

**Do you have any big plans or changes in mind for the next season?**
So many – we're just trying to make the show better. No cast changes, but I want to make better use of the beauty of Los Angeles.

**Aside from your duties as executive producer, how is working on *V.I.P.* different from working on *Baywatch*?**
At *Baywatch* I was a hired hand. *V.I.P.* is my vision, along with the studio's, but I have a big part in every decision. I also can't really imagine *Baywatch* being made into a video game.

**Speaking of which, are you at all involved with the development of the *V.I.P.* game?**
That depends on how many ideas of mine they want to use, though I'm having fun creating the concept along with everyone.

**Will the game be based on an episode of the show?**
No, it'll be an original adventure.

**If it turns out well, do you think you might want to turn the game into an episode of the show?**
That's actually a good idea.

**I understand you're going to be doing the voice of your character. But have you seen what you're going to look like in the game yet?**
It will be like Super Val.

**Will players be able to take on the role of Nikki or any of the other characters on the show?**
I think so.

**Will Molly Culver, Natalie Raitano, and the rest of the *V.I.P.* cast do their characters' voices as well?**
Yes, I'm sure they will.

**Have you started to think about what bands you'd like to get for the game's soundtrack?**
I always thought Tommy's [husband Tommy Lee's] music would be perfect, but I don't know if that will happen now. Maybe.

**Are you going to ask that the game be one your kids can play, or are you more interested in gearing the game to an older crowd?**
Probably an older crowd. My kids are still into *Sesame Street* on their iMac. They are not interested in video games.

**Have you ever been approached to be a character in a video game before?**
Yes, many times.

**What do you think of the way women video game characters look?**
Pretty hot.

**Well, that's what a lot of people would say about you, too. Speaking of which, do you ever have insecurities about the way you look?**
Oh, I usually don't focus on what I look like each day.

**So, how often do you get hit on in an average week?**
Not often.

**Really? What's the most hilarious line that's ever been used on you?**
"My bologna has a first name, it's L-A-R-G-E."

**What tips would you give a guy about picking up women who star in big TV shows?**
Don't bother; it's too much work.

**A few years ago you did the cover of *Details*, posing like in that famous Farrah Fawcett poster. Did doing that make you want to be in the *Charlie's Angels* movie?**
I would've loved to have been in that movie. I can't wait to see it; I'm sure the girls that they picked will be great.

**Are you planning to do any more movies in the future?**
I'm developing some ideas.

**There's been, oh, one or two rumors about you over the years. What's the funniest one you've ever heard?**
Thirty thousand dollars' worth of dental work? That I'm putting out a chanting album....

**The last thing I want to talk with you about is your interest in animal-rights issues. Besides not wearing fur, you're a vegetarian. Did you have a lot of pets as a kid?**
I had a lot of cats.

**How do you feel about the way animal-rights activists get their point across? Do you ever think they go too far?**
Thank God for them – someone needs to wake people up.

**Will there be any animal-rights gameplay in the *V.I.P.* game? Like a level where you liberate some chickens or throw red paint on a fur at a fashion show?**
I'm sure it'll be in there somewhere.



BY JOE VALLINA
PHOTOGRAPHY BY RAJAT GHOSH

# BITTERSWEET SALVATION

**Gathering of Developers** was recently acquired by Take-Two Interactive. Is this the death of independent game publishing or a new beginning?

When Mike Wilson and Harry Miller formed Gathering of Developers two years ago, the duo wanted to turn the game-publishing business on its ear. Their plan was simple: put the decision-making power in the hands of the developers, whose vision they thought was too often compromised by publishing bigwigs who knew little or nothing about gaming.

The Gathering would be a full-service publisher, but it would operate in ways no other game publisher would ever dare. It would let developers keep all of the intellectual property (IP) rights for game titles and characters, which is virtually unheard of in the games business. (IP rights include the game's name, source code, characters, copyrights, and trademarks, among other things.) It would also pay retroactive, escalating royalties to the developers. This means that as a sales milestone was reached and the developer's royalty percentage increased, The Gathering would apply the new royalty percentage to all copies sold. Again, this was unheard of in game publishing at the time.

And when The Gathering published its developer contract on its Web site (www.godgames.com), it generated much criticism among traditional game publishers, who bristled at having the details – and secrets – of how the publishing business works available to the public. Developers, some of whom were quite surprised to see what they might not be getting from their current publishers, soon began flocking to the fledgling publishing house. But The Gathering still had one problem: It needed money.

■ **TAKING STOCK** The Gathering co-founder Mike Wilson ponders the future of the company after its acquisition by Take-Two.



**THE ONES WHO STARTED IT ALL** Gathering of Developers original members (left to right) Binu Philip, Harry Miller, Rick Stults, Jim Bloom, Mike Wilson, and Doug Myers.

## THE HUNT FOR CASH

Wilson and Miller started The Gathering with $150,000 in 1998, but from the start they knew they would need to raise a lot more to get the business off the ground. Wilson, an LSU graduate who began his gaming career with *Quake* developer id Software, and Miller, former CEO of *SiN* developer Ritual, knew how to make games, but were admittedly naive when it came to raising funds.

Wilson and Miller spent three months in the offices of institutional investors, bankers, and venture capitalists showing their business plan and getting basically nowhere. By the time E3 (the annual Electronic Entertainment Expo) rolled around in May, they found themselves up against what would come to be a very familiar wall.

Explains Wilson, "We had gotten a big booth in Atlanta that we knew we couldn't pay for. We had told our developers, 'This is it. Either we'll all get funded and The Gathering will be off and running, or you'll have a really good booth to show your games to other publishers.'"

Enter Take-Two Interactive. At 5:00 in the morning on the first day of E3, Wilson and Miller received a check from the New York-based publisher for $5 million. Take-Two was trying to build a PC-distribution infrastructure at the time, and The Gathering fit perfectly into those plans. With developers like Terminal Reality, 3D Realms, and Epic on its roster, The Gathering had a strong enough lineup of games to put Take-Two on the PC-distribution map. Wilson and Miller used Take-Two's money to set up an office and hire a full staff, and The Gathering was officially off and running.

Even so, Wilson and Miller knew that $5 million wouldn't be enough to keep the company going for long, so they immediately hit the road again to look for more investors. Unfortunately, their timing couldn't have been worse. Remembers Wilson, "It was during the start of the whole Internet IPO thing, so investors were like, 'If you're not a dotcom, what are you even doing in our office?' It really made it hard. Why would any institutional investors put money in something that had precedents like Acclaim and GT Interactive, with really low stock values, when all these Internet stocks were skyrocketing?"

Even in the face of such difficult funding prospects, Wilson and Miller had reason to be optimistic. Their first game, *Jazz Jackrabbit*, shipped in the fall of 1998 with moderate success, and their second product, *Railroad Tycoon II*, sold a staggering 600,000 copies worldwide. Plus, The Gathering had a great lineup of games set to ship by the end of 1999.

Wilson and Miller spent almost all of 1998 looking for money, to no avail. Then, in February 1999, they made another deal with Take-Two, for $20 million. The deal gave Take-Two 19 percent of The Gathering and extended Take-Two's distribution rights. By the time the deal was made, *Railroad Tycoon II* had recouped almost a third of the $20 million. Wilson, Miller, and the rest of The Gathering were riding high.

Then the games started to slip.

## TOO LITTLE, TOO LATE

One by one, The Gathering's marquee titles for Christmas 1999, such as *Max Payne*, were delayed, some well into 2001. The bills, however, kept coming in.

PC games are notoriously expensive to produce, and The Gathering had decided early on not to publish console titles, a move that would haunt them in the months to come. Says Wilson, "If we would've had a big hit like *Railroad Tycoon II* on a console, that would have been a 1- or 2-million-seller. It would've been enough to pay for everything we were doing."

As it was, The Gathering had to find some money – fast. Wilson and Miller at first approached a pre-IPO Internet firm for what Wilson now calls a "pie-in-the-sky plan." After that deal didn't work out, though, Take-Two was once again waiting in the wings to bail out The Gathering. This time, however, the terms were significantly different.

Rather than extending the distribution deals as they had done in the past, this time Take-Two and The Gathering made a deal in May whereby The Gathering would be acquired by, and become a wholly owned subsidiary of, Take-Two. Thus ended The Gathering's run as an independent company.

Finalizing the deal was bittersweet for the Gathering's founders. While they were extending the life of the company they had come to think of as a "developer's publisher," they were also losing control of their baby. Miller explains, "It's mainly a pride thing. It's one thing to be the owners of a company and quite another to be employees of the company. But as far as our long-term goals for The Gathering, those will be strengthened. It's just our personal pride that's been hurt a little bit."

Wilson laments what could have been: "The thing that hurts for me is that we know that we've got a killer lineup coming this summer and fall, and we definitely would have recouped all our money and been solvent."

### UPCOMING TITLES

- Rune Q3 2000
- KISS Psycho Circus Q3 2000
- Heavy Metal Q3 2000
- Blair Witch Vol. 1-3 Q3, Q4 2000
- Kingdom Under Fire Q4 2000
- Fly! 2 Q1 2001
- Tropico Q1 2001
- Max Payne Q2 2001
- Shadowbane Q2 2001
- 4x4 Evolution Q2 2001

The deal shouldn't change things too much as far as The Gathering's partner developers are concerned. Their stock shares will be transferred to Take-Two stock, and the developers' publishing deals should get even better. Before, The Gathering acted as a middleman between the developers and Take-Two for European distribution. Now the developers will get their checks directly from Take-Two, so they will see more cash. Says Wilson, "Basically, all of our existing developer partners' deals stay the same or get better."

## WHAT'S NEXT?

Both founders are quick to point out that the new arrangement will open many doors for The Gathering. In addition to not having to worry about paychecks clearing the bank, the new source of funds will enable The Gathering to enact some plans that have been on hold since the company's inception.

Chief among these newly resurrected projects is On Deck Interactive (ODI), a sublabel of The Gathering described by Wilson as a gaming "farm league." Wilson goes on to say, "We hadn't been able to start up the ODI label, and we really wouldn't have had the money to do it if this deal didn't happen. We've turned away so many developers and so many good projects because we didn't have the money, and that sucks."

The Gathering will use the ODI label to publish games from developers that have yet to prove themselves with a big title. It will also be a vehicle to release games for the casual gaming market. Wilson explains, "Not many people play all the way through a game anymore. The segment of the audience that needs 75 to 100 hours of gameplay is very small. We're hoping [to use ODI] to attack that broader market."

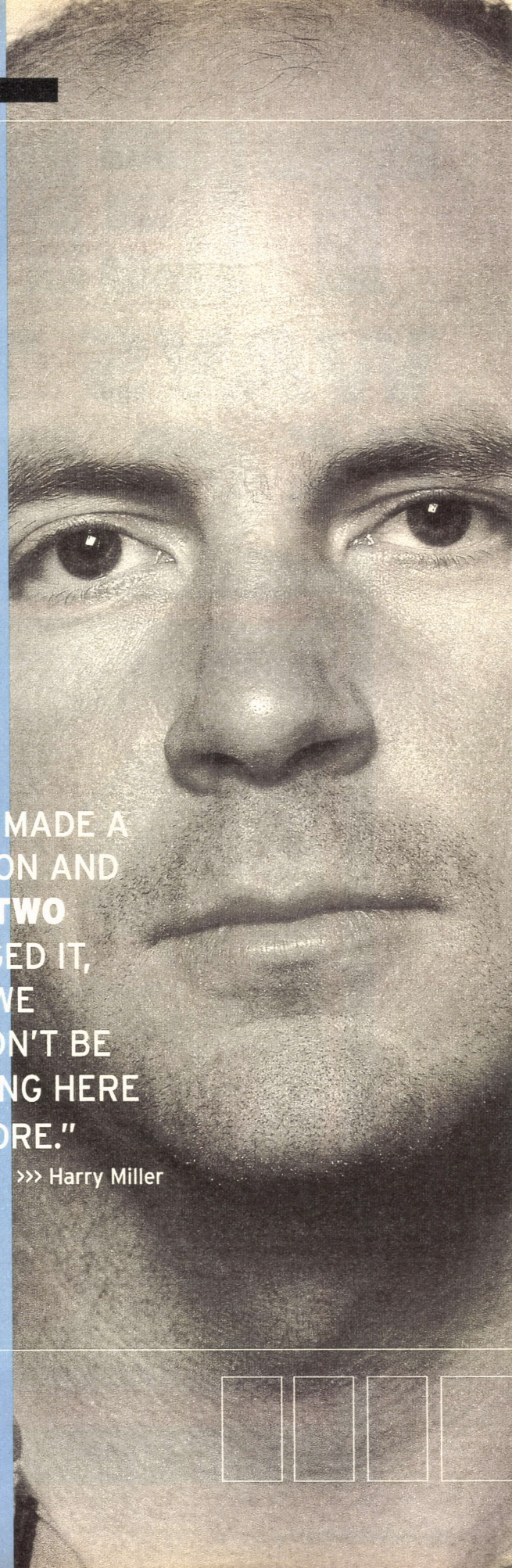
Expanding The Gathering's Internet presence and branching out into the console business are other priorities, as is hiring new people.

Both Wilson and Miller are confident that the Take-Two acquisition won't interfere with The Gathering's original mission: to give their developers the best publishing deal possible. While Take-Two now has the final say in running the company, Wilson and Miller are confident that Take-Two will continue the hands-off approach it has taken for the past two years.

Says Miller, "If we made a decision and they changed it, then we wouldn't be working here anymore. We're very confident that that's not the situation. We've been working with Take-Two for two years. We know how they think and how they work."

Some critics may say The Gathering's experiment in independent game publishing has failed, but Miller, not surprisingly, takes another view: "We think we've accomplished our goals. We wanted to bring attention to the problem developers have in the industry [i.e., getting bad deals]. We also want to make our developers as much money as we can. We do that by giving them great publishing agreements that reward success. As long as the games are good, they'll get made."

It remains to be seen if the cash-flush, Take-Two-era Gathering of Developers will be better able to fulfill all of its goals. What isn't up for debate, however, is that The Gathering staff will keep doing everything in its power to make sure developers get a fair shake and gamers get the best possible games.



"IF WE MADE A DECISION AND **TAKE-TWO** CHANGED IT, THEN WE WOULDN'T BE WORKING HERE ANYMORE."

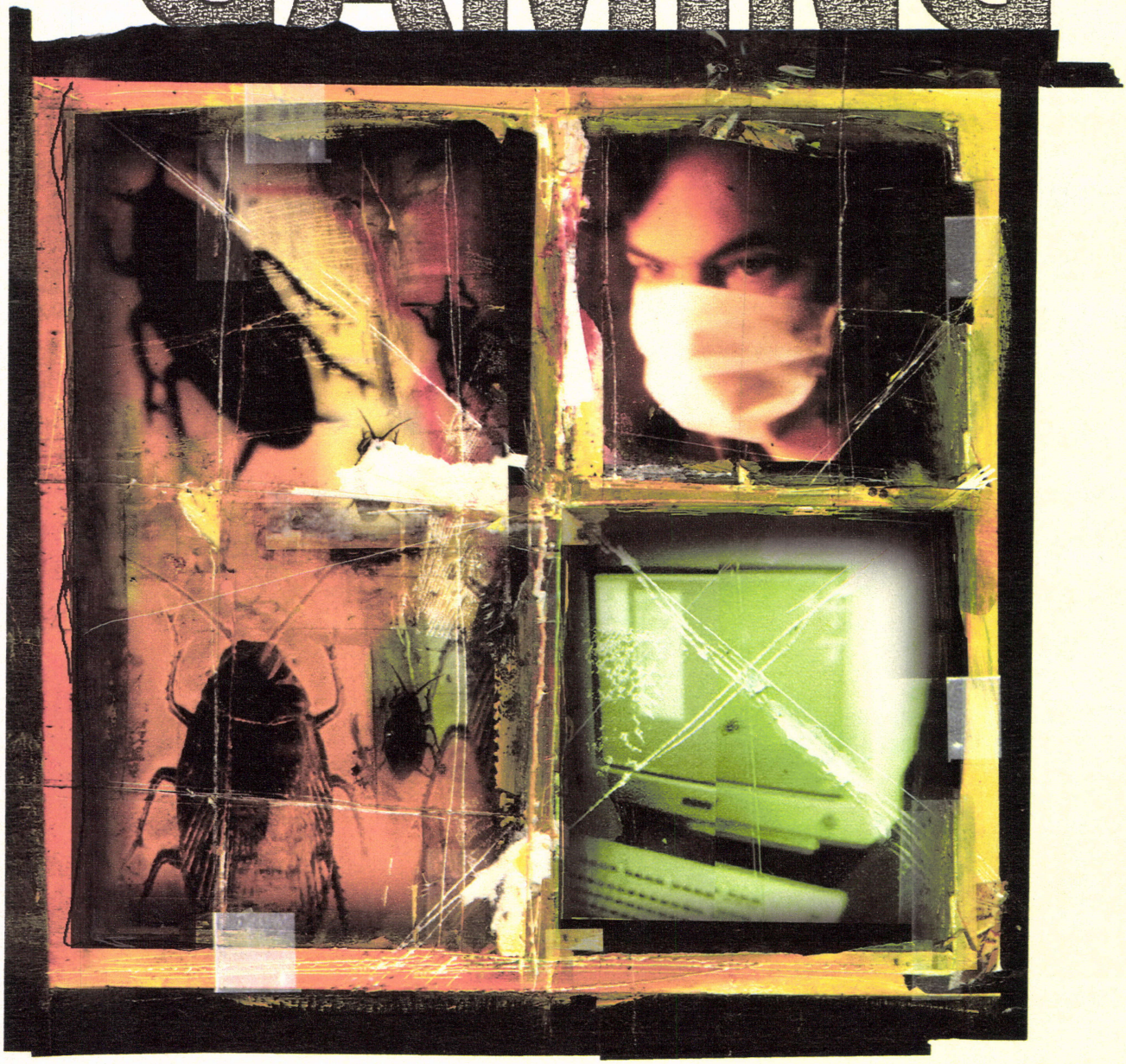
>>> Harry Miller

■ **WHAT'S NEXT?** The Gathering co-founder Harry Miller is only looking ahead at this point.

# TEN WAYS TO SAVE PC GAMING

**BY GARY ENG WALK**

ILLUSTRATIONS BY ANASTASIA VASILAKIS



# TEN WAYS TO SAVE PC GAMING

If you're a devoted computer player, chances are you're already on the defensive, shouting, "There's nothing wrong with PC gaming!" We don't blame you for being stubborn. After all, even when superconsoles like the PlayStation 2 hit the streets, PCs will always outpace consoles in the technology department, right? Yes, but make no mistake: PC gaming does need saving.

In 1999 just three PC titles had sales of 500,000 or more in the U.S., according to The NPD Group. Forty-one console games performed this feat last year. The figures for total sales are just as humbling: The $1.5 billion PC games took in last year sounds like something to cheer about, but it's pocket change compared with the $3.6 billion earned by consoles. It gets worse: with the PlayStation 2's American debut just months away, expect even more market-share erosion for PCs. And if the PS2 fails to deliver a killing blow to the platform, new machines such as Microsoft's X-Box and Nintendo's Dolphin could finish the job when they arrive in 2001. As a PC gamer, you should be concerned.

Already we're seeing PCs become a distant second option for many major publishers as they choose to allocate all of their resources to console games, or, at the very least, hedge their bets with console versions of their PC games. In the worst-case scenario, PC game development won't be economically feasible for any company.

Now for the good news: The problems with PC gaming, though serious, are nothing that can't be solved. The industry as a whole just needs a better game plan. Here are 10 ways to keep PC gaming alive and well.

## 1 WOO BACK DEFECTING DEVELOPERS

**PROBLEM:** Developers and publishers clearly favor console development now. Stalwart supporters of the PC are defecting: Acclaim, Psygnosis, and Take-Two Interactive have all but abandoned the PC market. Even longtime PC-only publishers are beginning to hedge their bets with console development. Gathering of Developers is porting over *KISS Psycho Circus* to the Sega Dreamcast, for example, and Bungie is developing a PlayStation 2 version of its highly anticipated *Halo*.

**SOLUTION:** It's easy to get swept up in the hype stirred up by next-generation consoles. The industry needs to be reminded that PC games can still pay the bills.

All that's needed is to aggressively lobby game companies about the economic potential PC games represent. This shouldn't be a hard job: Companies such as Blizzard, Maxis, and even Disney Interactive all have highly profitable, megaselling hits in *Diablo II, The Sims,* and *Who Wants to Be a Millionaire,* respectively. "PC gaming is very profitable if done right," points out Epic Games CEO Mark Rein.

The next logical question is, With no one company in charge of the PC gaming platform, who's going to play the role of evangelist? We have a suggestion, naturally....

## 2 BAND TOGETHER, BRAND TOGETHER

**PROBLEM:** One of the most striking differences between the console and PC game industries is that Sony oversees the PlayStation, Sega oversees the Dreamcast, and Nintendo oversees the Nintendo 64. No one really oversees PC gaming, and that's a huge disadvantage when it comes to two crucial areas: quality control and marketing. PC gaming needs an identity and brand as recognizable as PlayStation.

**SOLUTION:** Back in 1997 movie studios and consumer-electronics companies got together and formed the DVD Entertainment Group, which advocates for the digital-movie format. It's in the best interest of anyone connected to home computers – i.e., software and hardware makers – to get together and form a new entity, the sole purpose of which is to advance the prominence of PC gaming. We'll call this new consortium PCG.

The first thing PCG should do is hire a PR and advertising agency, design a snazzy logo, and establish a brand in the minds of consumers. One of the few advantages of the lack of a primary PC game company is that publishers don't need to pay anyone the licensing fees one needs to pay to Sega, Sony, and Nintendo for each game. PC game publishers could sink these saved costs into a fund to help offset the cost of the new PCG group. They could also ask Bill Gates for a handout, since Microsoft would stand to gain more than most companies if PC gaming reaches unprecedented levels of popularity.



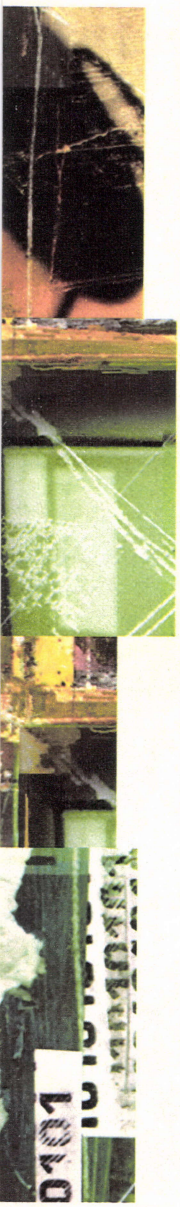
## 3 MAKE GAMES EASIER TO INSTALL

**PROBLEM:** Scraping together enough dough to buy a new PC game is the easiest part of your battle. You still have to go home and install it, which can be a confounding experience.

**SOLUTION:** First, get rid of the now-standard rite of entering in those Great Wall of China-length antipiracy codes. Next, remove the complexity of the dialog screens: There should be one screen that comes up when you pop in a game CD, and one that offers standard and customized installation methods.

The standard method should be the one that satisfies everyone but the

In 1999 just three PC titles had sales of **500,000 or more** in the U.S.



most advanced computer techie, and the one that does everything automatically (including creating a new directory).

It should not ask the user to sign up for Internet access or register online, launch a "ReadMe" file, or place shortcuts on the desktop. If users want to do any of this nongame-related stuff, they can find it all in the Windows Start menu program group for the game and do it manually. Eliminate any unnecessary steps in game installation.

## 4 MAKE PC GAMES COOL AGAIN

**PROBLEM:** From TV stars to pro athletes, console games seem to find their way into the hands of celebrities. You also see far more commercials and ads for console games than PC games. PC games are more and more becoming a niche product and have a stale and stodgy aura about them.

**SOLUTION:** Publishers need to be more visible in the marketplace. This means sponsoring more events, buying TV and print ads, handing out pamphlets at ballparks, and the like.

Maxis was on the right track when it ran wickedly clever ads on MTV for *The Sims* earlier this year. The company also sponsored MTV's "Wanna Be a VJ 3" contest in April.

We're not saying PC companies should break the bank on advertising, but they should at least loosen the wallet a tad when drawing up their promotional budgets.

To get cooler, PC games also will have to aim younger. There should be a concerted effort to develop games that cater less to older PC tech-heads and more to casual, younger players. Dare we mention a possible Britney Spears CD-ROM? Don't laugh: The more people who play PC games of any kind, the better. Everyone would benefit from the extra revenue that would result from attracting more mainstream consumers.

PC games are more and more **becoming a niche product.**



## 5 DEVELOP HARDWARE STANDARDS

**PROBLEM:** Despite the advent of USB ports, even a seemingly elementary task such as installing a controller can be problematic. USB's promise of true plug-and-play games hasn't been completely fulfilled yet. Countless combinations of sound, video, and processor configurations – there's Direct X, 3dfx, nVidia, SBLive – just add to the incompatibility mix. They also add to gamers' installation and compatibility nightmares.

**SOLUTION:** It may be a pipe dream, but universal, hardware-blind games that are compatible with any PC are the key. At the very least, Microsoft needs to keep refining its DirectX API set. Some good old-fashioned competition should set the pace: A band of companies, including 3dfx, 3Dlabs, ATI, Compaq, Discreet, Evans & Sutherland, IBM, S3, and SGI, are working on their own universal API called OpenMLit, which also promises a golden age of peripheral and hardware harmony.

## 6 QUIT MAKING CRAP GAMES

**PROBLEM:** Games such as *The Sims* that sell more than a million copies are rarer than a unanimous vote in the Senate. For every *Diablo II*, there seem to be 20 *Wild Wild West*-caliber clunkers.

**SOLUTION:** The surprising answer is to publish fewer games. "The less PC games there are, the better we're going to do," states Epic's Rein. "Even bad games compete with you for shelf space. So the fewer new releases there are, the more often mine can stay at the front of the store."

The trick is to publish not just fewer games, but more grade-A titles. Publishers need to be far more selective – even more so than their console counterparts – when it comes to green-lighting prospective game projects. Sad excuses such as *Braveheart* should never have made it further than Eidos' trash can.



## 7 MAKE GAMES MORE ACCESSIBLE TO BEGINNERS

**PROBLEM:** Graphics aren't the only aspect of PC games that has taken giant leaps in sophistication over the years. Gameplay itself is more advanced than ever – Red Storm needed more than 100 pages in the game manual to explain how to play *Rogue Spear!* PC games skew to older audiences, but that doesn't mean they need to alienate rookies and newcomers, which is exactly what happens with most of the titles available today.

**SOLUTION:** Developers need to include more comprehensive in-game tutorials within their games. Up until this point these charitable handouts to newbies have been sporadic. Better-printed documents, more keyboard templates (which used to be included with all games but now are a rarity) would also help, as would more games that simply have such intuitive gameplay and control that the player needs no help to get started. "The best games, regardless of platform, are never intimidating to install or play," points out id Software CEO Todd Hollenshead. "They are intuitive while being novel at the same time."

## 8 KILL THE DAMN BUGS

**PROBLEM:** Game bugs are still epidemic – and only seem to get worse as games get more complex.

**SOLUTION:** The reality is that there's no way to completely cure game bugs. "As long as they have to design one product to be compatible with everyone's computer hardware, game companies will never get rid of bugs completely," says Steve Selwell, a producer at Raven Software.

Publishers can dramatically reduce them, however, if they get better at forecasting development times and give their programmers more time to work on the games. Says Rein, "Blame the publishers. Ultimately, they decide when to release a game. I've yet to meet a programmer who was happy that his game was ready to get released when it got released. There are a lot of publishers using a 'release first, patch later' strategy."

## 9 DESIGN INEXPENSIVE, ATTRACTIVE PCS

**PROBLEM:** While $2,000 gets you a much more powerful computer now than it did five years ago, $500 still gets you bupkis. And all of them have yet to look like anything more than a drab slab of plastic.

**SOLUTION:** PC manufacturers need to step up to the plate, designing more sub-$1,000 PCs and instituting more user-friendly designs. Dell or Gateway may even want to design its own pseudo-X-Box, a specialty PC stripped of everything that's not essential to gaming.

The PC industry needs to recognize its **inherent advantages.**

## 10 LEVERAGE THE PC'S STRENGTHS

**PROBLEM:** Missed opportunities and strategic fumbles are the PC industry's specialties. More than half of U.S. households have some kind of home computer. But PC companies aren't very good at trumpeting its best qualities – namely, its innate ties to the Web and multiplayer gaming – or the growing popularity of laptop computers.

**SOLUTION:** The PC industry needs to recognize its inherent advantages over consoles, then leverage them in its marketing and promotion efforts.

Unlike consoles, which parents have to go out of their way to purchase, the PC is a device that's already in millions of households. Millions more own laptops, yet no one is promoting the fact that they can play today's state-of-the-art PC titles.

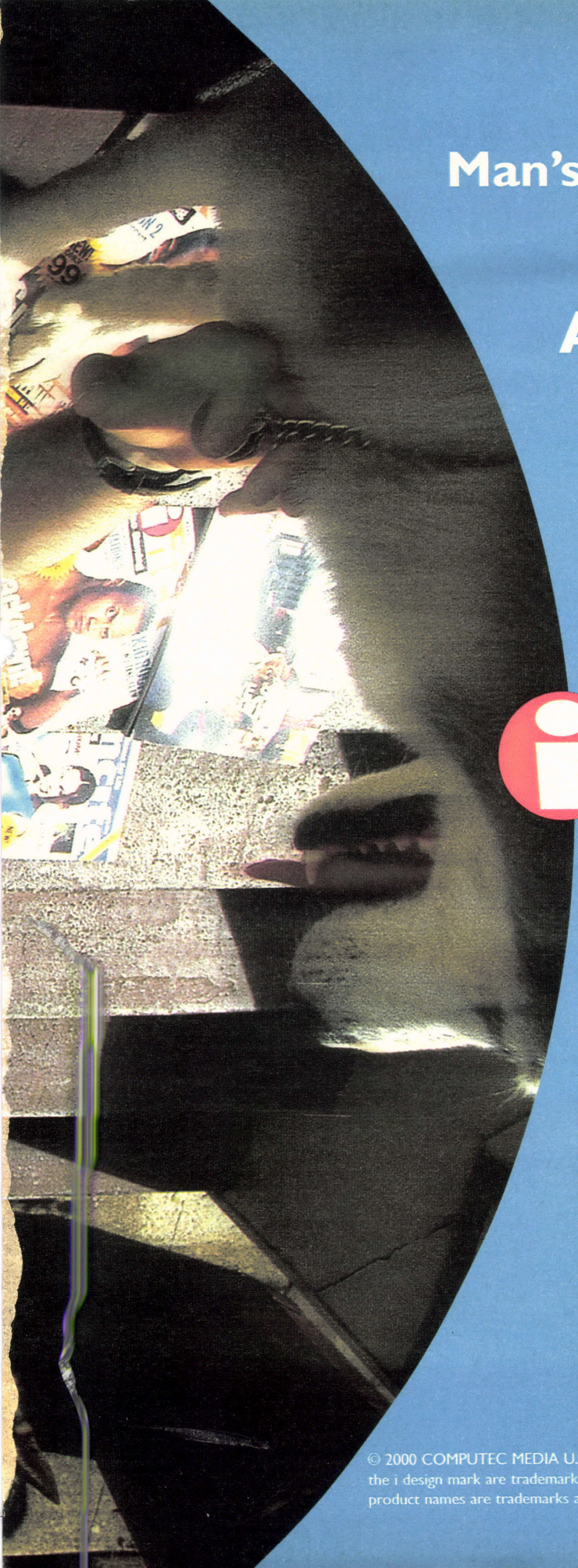
The industry has also underachieved in touting the PC's multiplayer and Internet capabilities. Companies should offer more game demos, Internet interactivity, and downloadable game enhancements to consumers.

## THERE YOU HAVE IT

So, these are our heroic, no-holds-barred ways to save PC gaming. If you agree with 'em, mail this to your favorite game publisher. If you think we're nuts, email us at letters@ipc.com.



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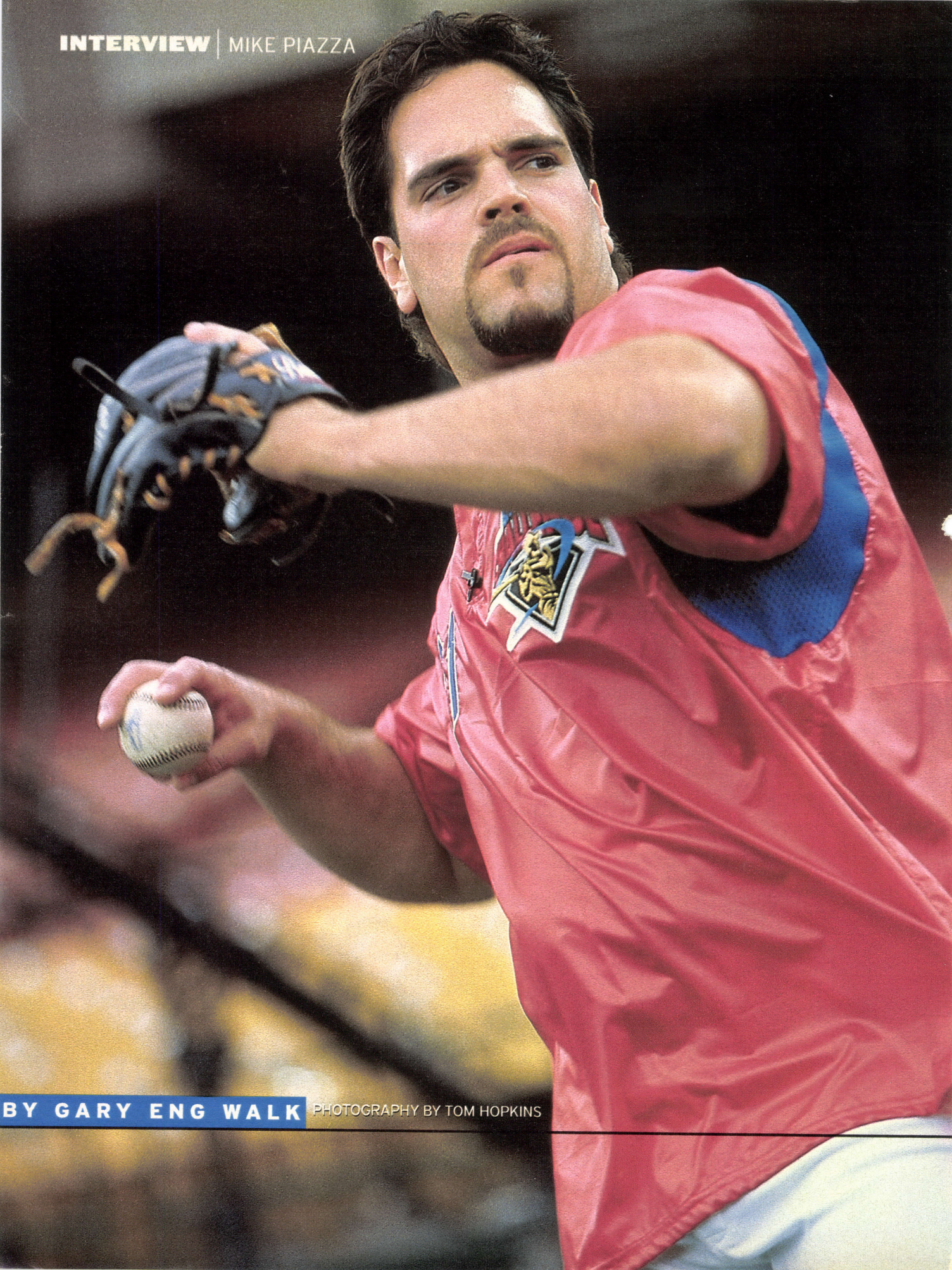



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incite



**BY GARY ENG WALK** PHOTOGRAPHY BY TOM HOPKINS

# Catch 31

## Mike Piazza Talks about PC games, blond hair, and — oh, yeah — baseball

**Since his Rookie of the Year award in '93, slugger Mike Piazza has been the undisputed premier catcher in the National League. No. 31 is also this year's spokesman for EA Sports' *Triple Play* game. *incite PC Gaming* sat down with the seven-time All-Star and pitched him a few questions.**

**You're one of the few people who hits home runs better in real life than in these video game home run derbies.**
I guess that's a good thing for me. But I plan to get better [at playing games].

**Do you play PC games very often?**
I wish I had the time to do it more. I travel a lot. The cool thing now is the fact that you have a lot of the laptops to play games on.

**So, what games are you good at?**
I like the strategic war games, vintage fighters, and tank games. There's this one Civil War game *[Gettysburg]* that's been out for years but it's still cool. The neat thing about [games] is the unlimited possibilities with data, especially with the sports games. They're getting more and more realistic. Before, you had nonidentifiable figures. Now you have actual faces.

**That's true: *Triple Play*'s faces are pretty realistic. Did they get the Mike Piazza mustache right?**
Actually, they got it straighter than I do.

**What's great about baseball video games in particular?**
Kids love playing the games, and they identify with you because they want to be you. When I was a kid I wanted to be Mike Schmidt.

**Who of the following gets beaten up the most while on defense: an NHL goalie, an MLB catcher, or John Rocker?**
I'll refrain from any John Rocker comment. I'm going to say I have a lot of sympathy for hockey players. They get beat up more than we do. However, the beating we take is more prolonged. They only play 80-something games.

**A lot has been made about you possibly moving to first base, but you've been adamant about remaining a catcher. Is that because you have a lot of pride in your defensive abilities?**
That's part of it. I enjoy catching. I've worked hard at becoming a catcher. I think the only reason why this is an issue is the fact that I hit so well. If I was hitting seventh in the order and hitting .260 with 10 home runs a year, no one would care. Maybe I'll move someday if the need arises, but as long as I keep hanging in there physically I'll stay [as catcher].

**You're supposed to catch fewer games this year, right?**
That would be ideal, but the only way that could come about is if we're winning. If we're in the race and we're winning and we're doing really well, it would be easy for me to catch less. But if we need to win it's going to be more difficult.

**The score is tied; the winning run is coming home down the third-base line. Rey Ordoñez fires the relay to you. Who is the last person you want to see barreling into you?**
Size and speed is a deadly combination. Raul Mondesi is big and very quick. There are some other guys that are pretty big. Kevin Mitchell would be bad too. Ideally I'd like to see Mark Lemke [5-foot-9; 170 pounds]. No offense to Mark.

**What do you think is the most exciting play in baseball?**
A combination of a game-winning, walk-off home run and a play at the plate. If there's a play at the plate, that guy's the tying run, the ball comes in and you tag him out [and] that's the end of the game, that's pretty exciting.

**What's your most important statistic?**
Wins and losses, because if you're winning, everything else is going to be there. If the Mets are winning, I'm going to have my numbers. I'm not at all concerned about average hits, home runs, RBIs, average on turf, average on dirt. Everything else will take care of itself.

**"Sports games are getting more and more realistic. Before, you had non-identifiable figures. Now you have actual faces."**

**Last year was a good year, but there were times when the New York fans were all over you. Do you ever think, 'What do I have to do to please these guys?'"**
No. You know what? I'm flattered by it. I don't look at as being eventful or frustrating for me. There are very few players in the history of baseball and New York sports who have been under that sort of scrutiny, as far as getting three hits and still getting criticized for not getting that fourth hit. That to me is an honor.

**You dyed your hair blond over the off-season, but now you're back to your natural color. Do blonds have more fun?**
That was an experiment. You know what's funny? For that month, I actually did have more fun than other months, so the theory does hold up. Maybe there's some truth there.

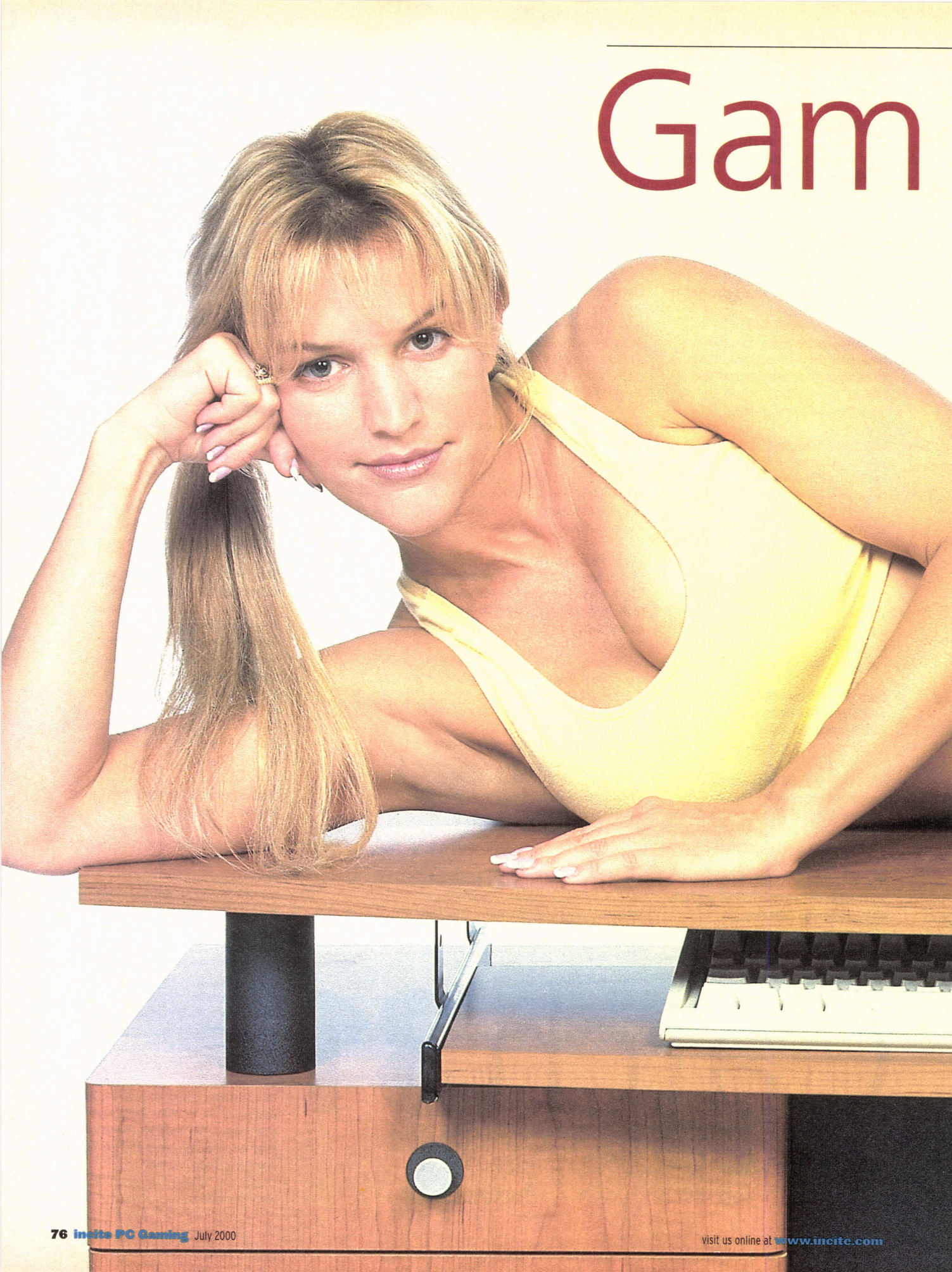
**You must've been in New York at the time.**
I was. All my friends thought I was a different person... and then my roots grew out.

**What would you say is the biggest misconception about baseball?**
I think people's perception that publicity and money have changed the game. It'll always be the game, whether guys are making the league minimum or $30 million a year. It's still baseball, still about guys who go out there and give everything they have to try and win the World Championship. You cannot get to the major league level without a certain level of discipline and a certain amount of affinity and love of baseball.

**What do you say to people who believe baseball is boring?**
The problem with today is that we live in a society that's so predetermined on the clock. Baseball's the only sport that's isn't based on the clock. Baseball's like a book that unfolds – you can't go and say "Well, I'm going to read *War and Peace* and I've got exactly four days and 26 minutes to read it." No, you're going to read that book, and the more you're captivated by it and the more that drama pulls you in, the more you're going to enjoy reading it. Same thing with baseball – the drama, the matchups, the strategy within the game. That gets lost today because everything is based on the clock; everything has to be in a hurry. That's why baseball gets a bad rap.

**Now that Ken Griffey Jr. is in the National League, all the premier sluggers are in your league. You could hit 40 homers this year and not even crack the top 10. How does that make you feel?**
I'm glad that I'm signed for seven years. At least none of those guys catch.

# Gam



# er's Workout

## Stay in Shape While Gaming

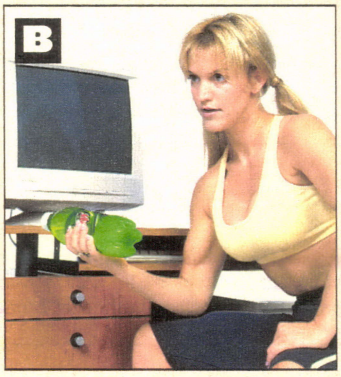
PHOTOGRAPHY BY **BENJAMIN HOFFMAN**;
HAIR AND MAKEUP BY **LORI DEPP/VISAGES**

Sitting at your desk playing games all day is no excuse for being a fat slob. Even so, we know how difficult it can be to stop playing long enough to go to the gym (you know, the place where people go to sweat). That's why we enlisted the services of **HEIDI VAN AMBURGH** from MTV's *Grind Workout*. With her help we've put together some exercises you can do at your computer while you plot your next move in *Alpha Centauri* or download that new *Quake III* mod. Although you might not earn a starring role in *Buns of Steel*, you'll at least have an excuse for eating that extra cheeseburger, tubby.

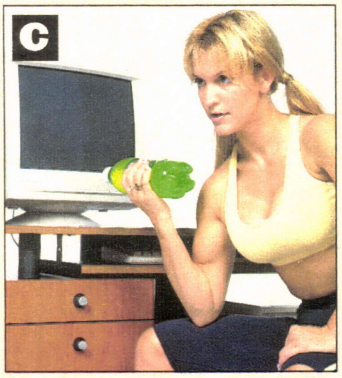
### 20-Ounce Curls




**DO THE DEW** Grab a 20-ounce bottle of your favorite soft drink (or a 40-ounce malt liquor for an extra tough workout).




**FEEL THE BURN, BABY!** A few reps and your biceps will look like Heidi's in no time. (Yeah, in 10 years maybe.)

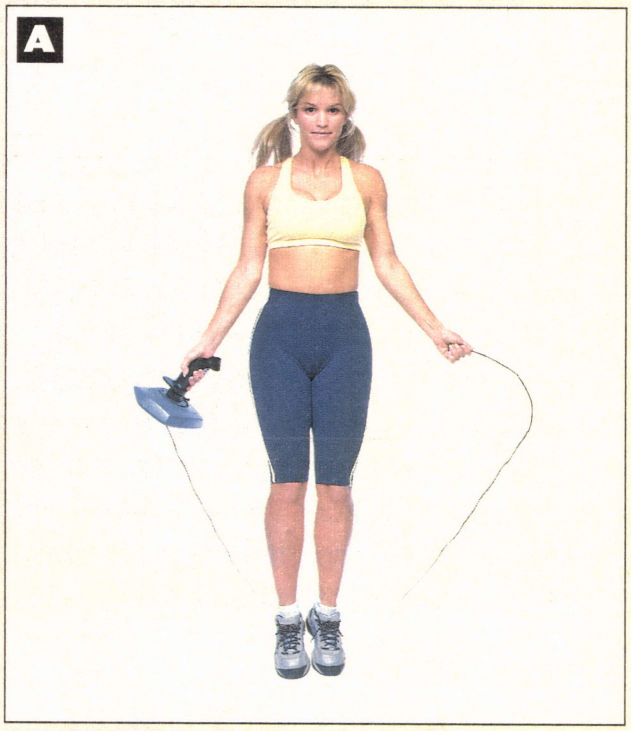



**WATCH THAT FORM** Back straight, eyes forward. Heidi demonstrates the perfect form for a 20-ounce curl.

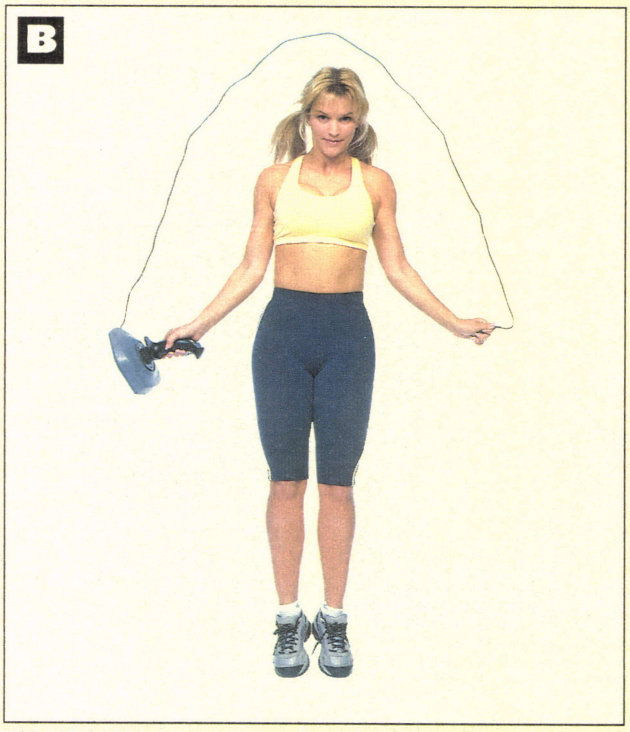



**THE PAYOFF** The best thing about these curls is that the more you drink, the easier it is to lift the weight.

# Joystick Jump Rope




**FOLLOW THE BOUNCING GIRL** Jumping rope – or in this case a joystick cable – is a great cardiovascular workout. It'll also give you quick feet to get to the bathroom and back before the next level finishes loading.




**HOP-ALONG HEIDI** Be sure keep your elbows in and let your wrists do the work. Also, pay special attention not to jump too high. The last thing we need is for your atrophied tendons to snap like rusty banjo strings.

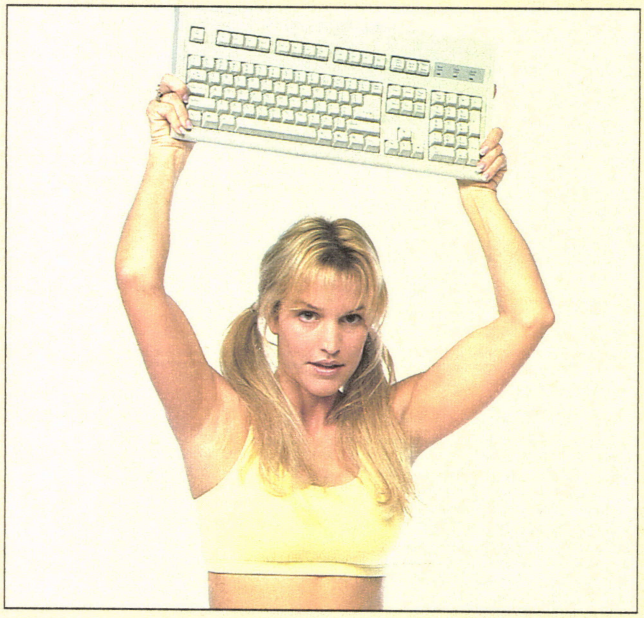
# Upright Row

**NOTHING LIKE A FIRM CHEST** While you're waiting for that 9-pound laptop to boot up, grip the sides and lift it up to your chest, then lower it again. Repeat until the machine has finished booting up (about 30 minutes).

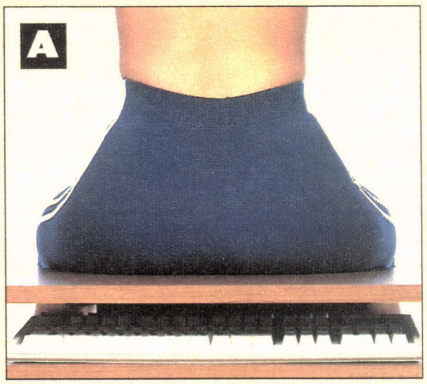


# Triceps Extension

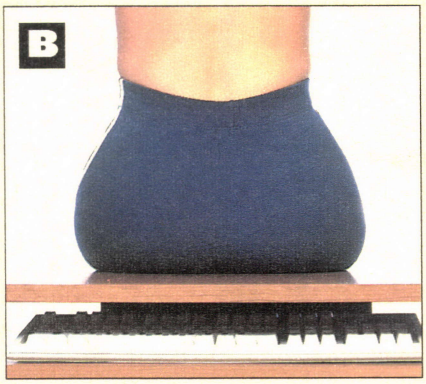
**QWERTY THIS, SUCKA!** Also known as the "Reginald Denny." The triceps extension is great for firming up that flab on the back of your arms. It's also great for delivering beat-downs during race riots.



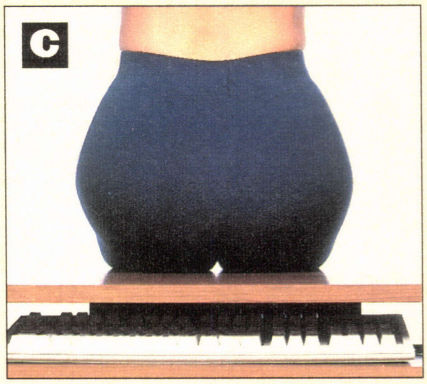
## Butt Clench




**CUSHION PUSHIN'** Everyone loves a tight butt. Start by sitting down, and relaxing what mama gave you. Now squeeze, squeeze, squeeze!




**THAT'S RIGHT, YOU'RE DOING IT!** Warning: If you don't lift up off the desk, it might be time to get up and hit the treadmill.




**NOW THAT'S LIFT** Bear in mind it'll be a while before you achieve this kind of lift. Heidi, on the other hand....

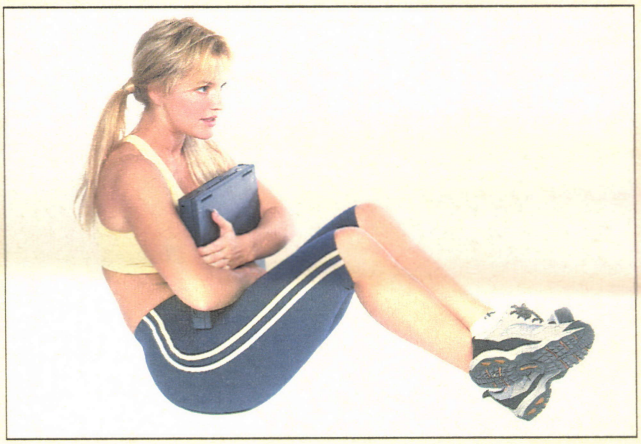
## Assisted Squat



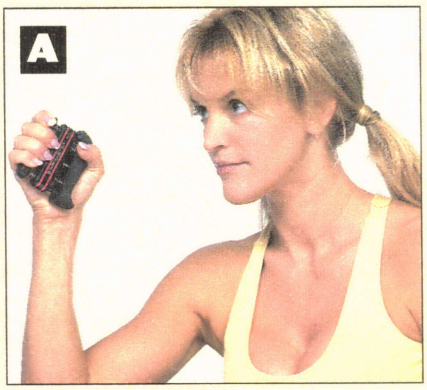
**WORK THOSE QUADS!** With your back straight, pull the lever that lowers your seat. Then pull the lever again and lift yourself back up. Chair goes up, chair goes down. Chair goes up, chair goes down. Chair goes up, chair goes down.

## Laptop Sit-Up

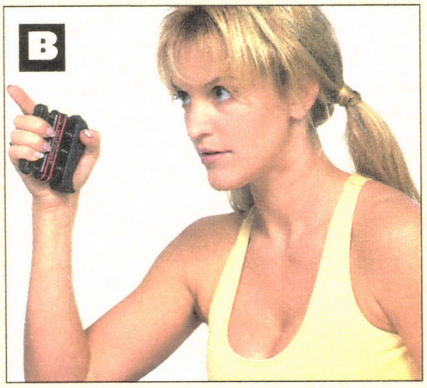
**PIII 450 ABS** Take your laptop, grasp it to your chest, and get to it. One of the guys asked Heidi if she could demonstrate the sit-up by grasping his head to her chest. She smiled and swiftly kicked him in the space bar.



## Finger Grip




**FIRM GRIP** You can find one of these finger-exercise gadgets at your local sports or musical-instrument store for less than $8.




**FAST-TWITCH REFLEXES** Build up that hand strength so weakened fingers won't spell defeat – or worse, the dreaded "game claw."




**ITCHY TRIGGER FINGER** When all is said and done you'll be the quickest shot in town. "Who wants some?" Does she really need to ask?



*LittleBunny_32* just **KICKED YOUR ASS**



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# playground

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**When I'm not playing, I like to watch.**

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# Review Nuts & Bolts

## WHAT DOES IT ALL MEAN? | Here's the Rosetta stone of our game reviews

**We test our games on 240 system configurations. Yours is guaranteed to be one of them.**

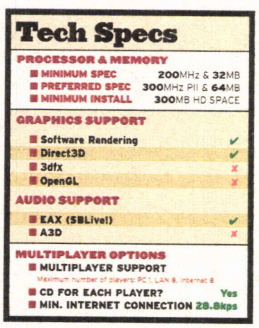
**Sure, that supercool new 3D action/adventure might get five stars on a Pentium III/500MHz screamer, but what good does that do your Pentium/166MHz-using ass? Now you'll get that important little piece of info before you buy. What a concept!**

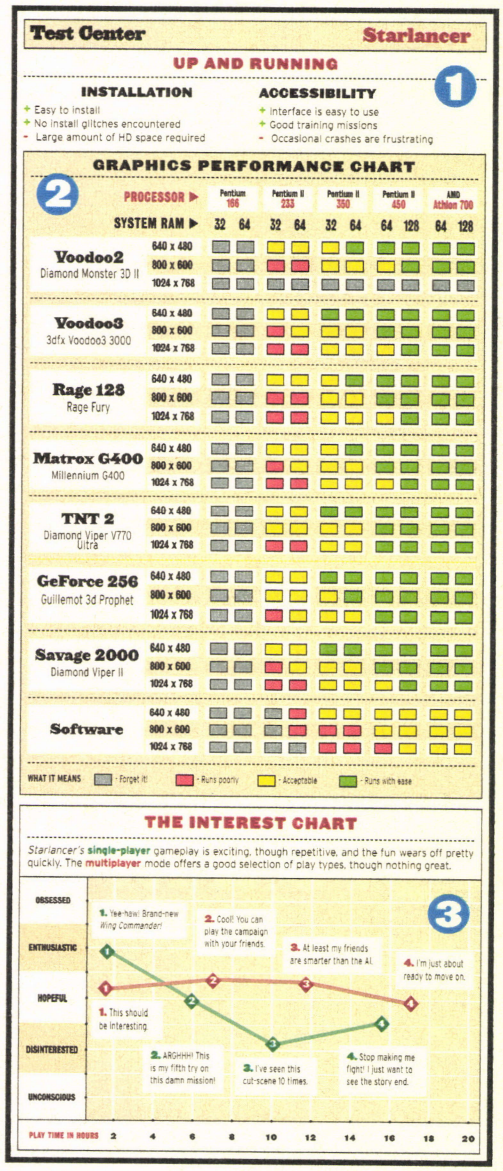
### Golden Award

So, what if a game is the ultimate in its genre – a true classic? Then it gets the *incite* Golden Award, the most coveted award in PC gaming. Only the best can get one. When you see it, you know the game is good.

### Tech Specs

This is the game's requirements in an at-a-glance boxout. Here we outline the minimum processor and memory needs, CPU compatibilities, audio and graphics support, and multiplayer options. Do all players need to have a copy of the game to play multiplayer? You'll find out here.




### 1 Up and Running

Finally, an easy-to-understand pros-versus-cons listing of what makes a game a breeze (or utter hell) to install and play. Say goodbye to those "Why won't this damn thing install?" blues.

### 2 Graphics Performance

This is the meat and potatoes of the Test Center. Here's where you find out if your system will run that hot new game we've been raving about for months. Simply cross-reference your processor and RAM configuration with the graphics card you're using. You'll then be able to see how the game will play at three different resolutions on your computer.

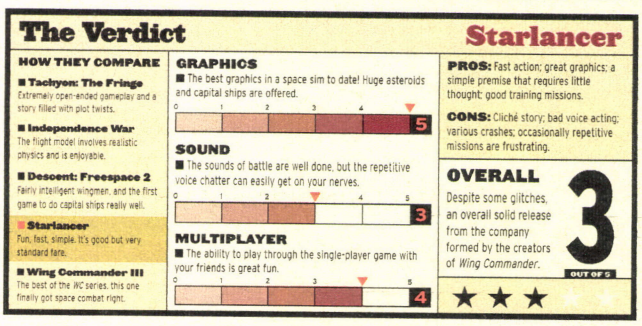
If your preferred-settings box is gray, you haven't got a chance in hell. If it's red, you'll likely be watching a slide show. If it's yellow, the game will run fast enough to be enjoyable, although you might see some jitters. If you're in the green, you're golden. The game will run as smooth as silk, and you will be one happy gamer.

### 3 The Interest Chart

Ever play a game that's a blast at the beginning and then about four hours in starts to feel about as fun as a third-world prison camp? So have we. That's why we devised this nifty little chart to tip you off to the point at which our interest level took a nosedive (if it ever did). We even break this up into two sections: solo play and multiplayer. Why do we do all this? Because we care.

### The Verdict

This is where we tell you what we think about the game. First we show you how the game being reviewed stacks up against other similar games in the genre. We then score how the game's graphics look, how its sounds sound, and how its multiplayer option plays. We also give you all the game's pros and cons and an overall score from one to five stars. This overall score is not an average of the graphics, sound, and multiplayer scores. Rather, its how the entire package performs when taken as a whole. Our score is honest and fair, and since it's coming from *incite PC Gaming*, you can take it as gospel!

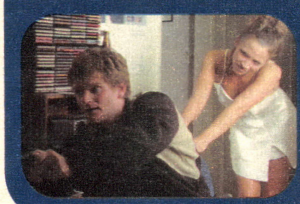


# WE UNDERSTAND...











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# Mindless Mayhem

Return to the simpler time of the Cold War with Microsoft's **STARLANCER**

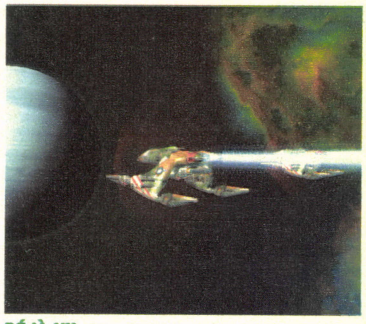
**FACT FILE** ■ PUBLISHER **Microsoft** ■ DEVELOPER **Digital Anvil** ■ GENRE **Action** ■ PLAYERS **1-8** ■ ESRB RATING **Everyone** ■ PRICE **$34.99**

**GAME GLANCE**

- 1 Solar system
- 2 Warring alliances
- 12+ Ships to fly
- 20+ Weapons
- 100 Screams of frustration

**New world, new enemy, new ships, new weapons – same game. From the creators of the famed *Wing Commander* series comes *Starlancer*, a space-based flight sim filled with fast-paced action, beautiful graphics, and, alas, a linear and predictable story.**

*By Di Luo*



**DÉJÀ VU** Like the *Wing Commander* games, *Starlancer* features cut-scenes.



**'80S REVISITED** Anyone up for a quick game of *Asteroids?* Anybody? Anybody?

The good folks down at Digital Anvil must subscribe to the theory that those who forget the lessons of history are doomed to repeat it. *Starlancer* takes you back to the Cold War via the future, when the Russians, Chinese, and Arabs have formed the evil Eastern Coalition to fight the Alliance of the Americans and their partners for domination of the solar system.

### History Revisited

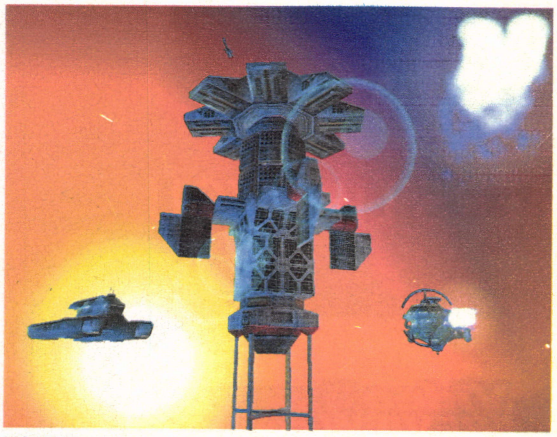
That future (i.e., the year 2160), begins as a time full of optimism and prosperity. Mankind has colonized the entire solar system, and the Alliance and Coalition are on the brink of ending their arms competition and dismantling their weaponry. On the eve of a treaty signing, however, the dastardly villains of the Coalition launch a surprise attack on the unsuspecting and idealistic Alliance, destroying much of their fleet and killing millions. (Anyone want to bet that the game designers at Digital Anvil are *Battlestar Galactica* fans?)

You are an American member of the ragtag 45th Volunteer Squadron, formed from a group of amateur pilots with no previous military experience. After an initial surprise attack by the Coalition, you are thrown into the desperate struggle of defending the last bastion of hope for capitalists everywhere. The regulars of the fleet, of course, treat your volunteers with little respect, but due to your heroism and fighting abilities, you are soon recognized as one of the elite Alliance outfits. (No offense, but hasn't this formula been used in every other flight and space-combat game since the dawn of space-combat time?)

With heavy use of carrier-based fighters and intense dogfights, *Starlancer* has been billed as a futuristic World War II flight sim. Strangely, though, you're fighting alongside the Germans and Japanese, who this time around are trying to prevent civilian massacres rather than cause them.

In the game, the Japanese and Germans even retain some of their insignias of old: The Germans still

***Starlancer* will draw you in with its spectacular graphics and fast gameplay.**



**BIG BOYZ** Capital ships and starbases in *Starlancer* play a large role, duking it out in many of the missions.



**INSIDE AN ASTEROID** There is a wide variety of mission objectives on tap, including this interstellar robbery of an enemy asteroid base.

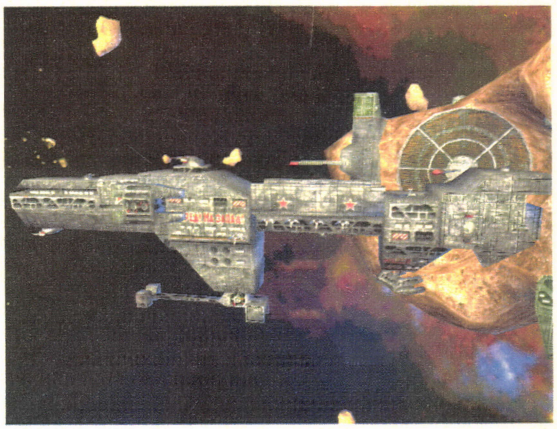
use the Iron Cross, and the Alliance has the Japanese imperial battle flag (which was abandoned by the Japanese after their defeat in WWII). Eventually, your squadron even gets renamed the Tigers, after the volunteer Flying Tigers of WWII that fought against the Japanese in China and Burma.

Despite a soap opera-like story with the usual betrayals, noble sacrifices, and more melodrama than 20 Mexican telenovelas, *Starlancer* will inexorably draw you in with its spectacular graphics and fast gameplay.

Every model, from gigantic capital ships to asteroids, is incredibly detailed and great-looking. The battles are epic in proportion, providing a more realistic feel of fighting in a large war filled with fleets of ships and multiple squadrons. It's different than the *Wing Commander* games, Digital Anvil's legacy, in which you feel like you're alone against the entire universe.

### Death and Destruction

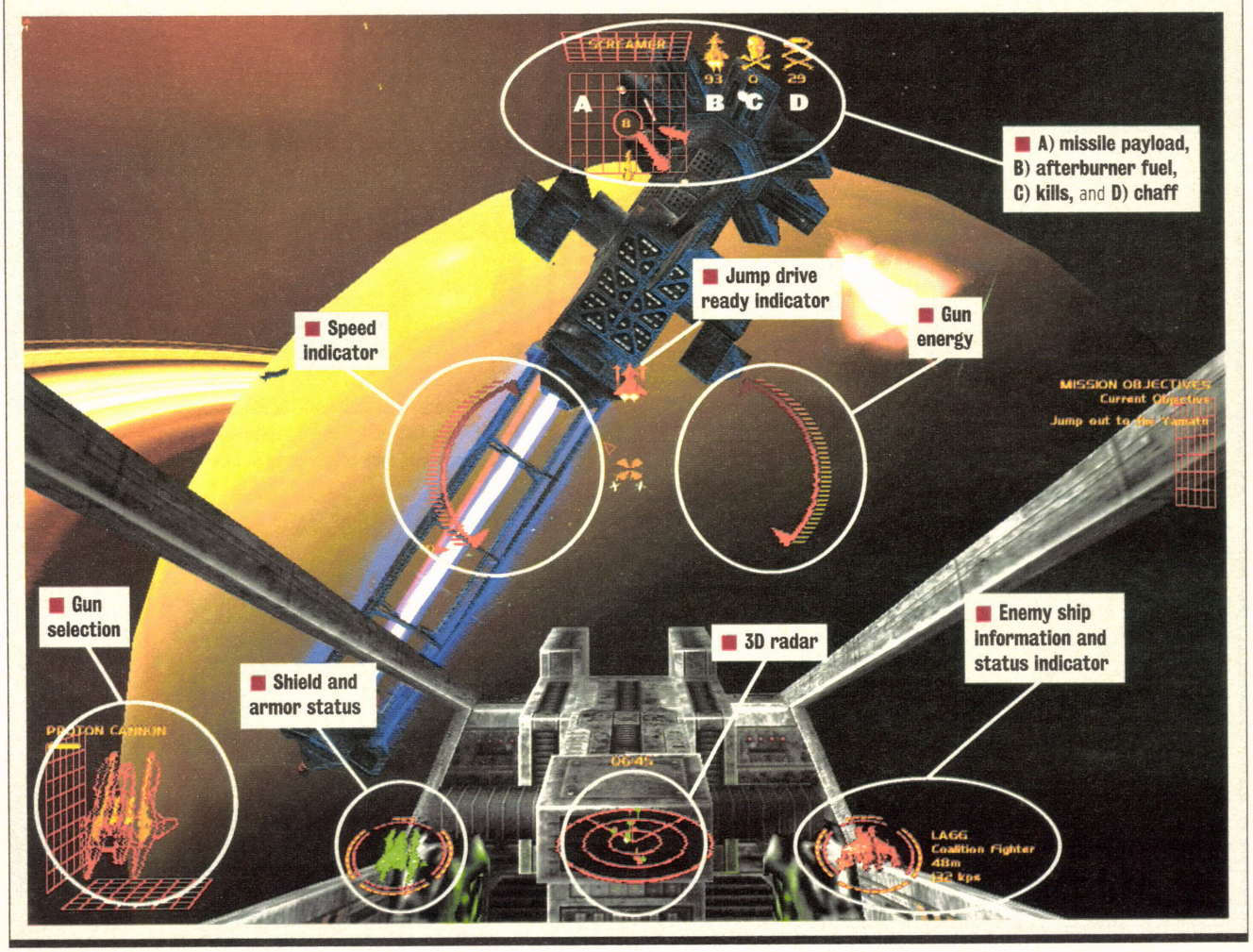
The combat interface is flawless and smooth, and a vast array of ships and weapons are offered. *Starlancer* also has an almost endless horde of enemies to kill. There is a wide range of mission goals, ranging from seek and destroy to infiltrating an enemy base on an asteroid. However, the essential nature of these missions remains similar throughout, and mirrors the *Wing Commander* games: You go from one waypoint to the next, destroying your enemies while protecting your friends. It's repetitive but usually enjoyable. Simplicity does have its charms.



**HOT WAR** The commies are back and meaner than ever, with horrible voices that would drive any capitalist insane.

## A CLOSER LOOK

# I'VE GOT YOUR COCKPIT RIGHT HERE



## Test Center — Starlancer

### UP AND RUNNING

**INSTALLATION**

+ Easy to install
+ No install glitches encountered
- Large amount of HD space required

**ACCESSIBILITY**

+ Interface is easy to use
+ Good training missions
- Occasional crashes are frustrating

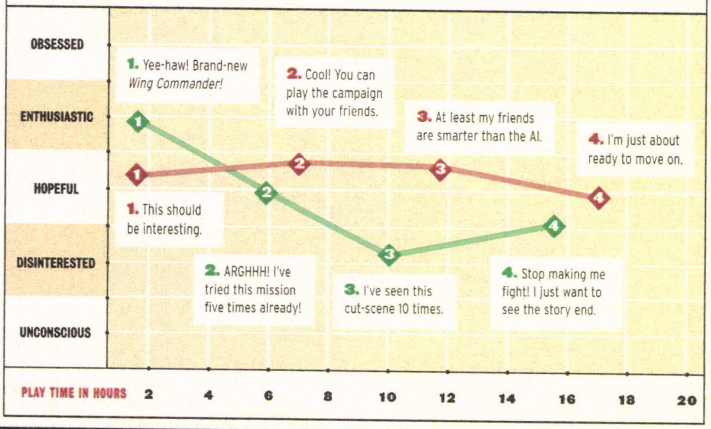
### GRAPHICS PERFORMANCE CHART

| | | Pentium 166 | | Pentium II 233 | | Pentium II 350 | | Pentium II 450 | | AMD Athlon 700 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | SYSTEM RAM ▶ | 32 | 64 | 32 | 64 | 32 | 64 | 64 | 128 | 64 | 128 |
| **Voodoo2** Diamond Monster 3D II | 640 x 480 | | | | | | | | | | |
| | 800 x 600 | | | | | | | | | | |
| | 1024 x 768 | | | | | | | | | | |
| **Voodoo3** 3dfx Voodoo3 3000 | 640 x 480 | | | | | | | | | | |
| | 800 x 600 | | | | | | | | | | |
| | 1024 x 768 | | | | | | | | | | |
| **Rage 128** Rage Fury | 640 x 480 | | | | | | | | | | |
| | 800 x 600 | | | | | | | | | | |
| | 1024 x 768 | | | | | | | | | | |
| **Matrox G400** Millennium G400 | 640 x 480 | | | | | | | | | | |
| | 800 x 600 | | | | | | | | | | |
| | 1024 x 768 | | | | | | | | | | |
| **TNT 2** Diamond Viper V770 Ultra | 640 x 480 | | | | | | | | | | |
| | 800 x 600 | | | | | | | | | | |
| | 1024 x 768 | | | | | | | | | | |
| **GeForce 256** Guillemot 3d Prophet | 640 x 480 | | | | | | | | | | |
| | 800 x 600 | | | | | | | | | | |
| | 1024 x 768 | | | | | | | | | | |
| **Savage 2000** Diamond Viper II | 640 x 480 | | | | | | | | | | |
| | 800 x 600 | | | | | | | | | | |
| | 1024 x 768 | | | | | | | | | | |
| **Software** | 640 x 480 | | | | | | | | | | |
| | 800 x 600 | | | | | | | | | | |
| | 1024 x 768 | | | | | | | | | | |

WHAT IT MEANS · Forget it! · Runs poorly · Acceptable · Runs with ease

### THE INTEREST CHART

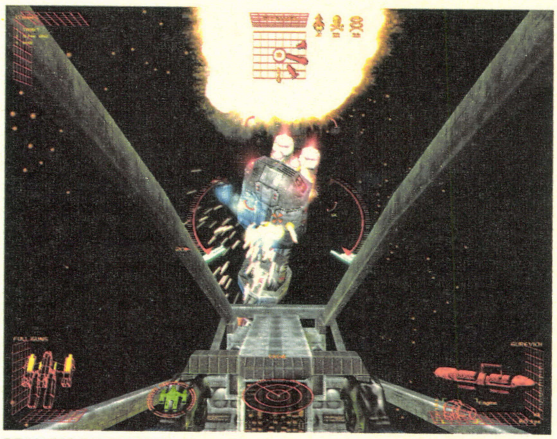
*Starlancer's* **single-player** gameplay is exciting, though repetitive, and the fun wears off pretty quickly. The **multiplayer** mode offers a good selection of play types, though nothing great.



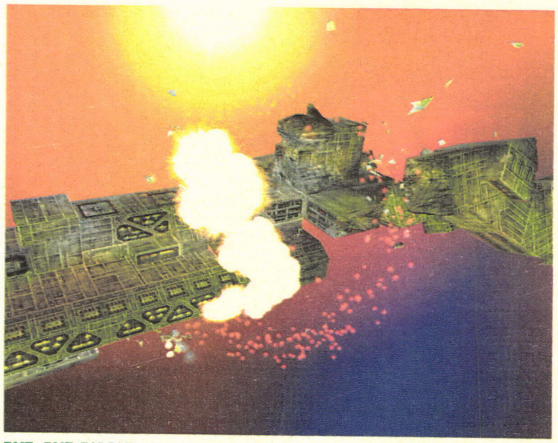

**You're fighting alongside the Germans and Japanese, who are trying to prevent civilian massacres.**

Unfortunately, the mindless fun offered by the combat is marred by the voice acting – especially with the stereotypical accents – which is repetitive at best and often extremely grating at worst. Hearing the same taunt from the enemy for the millionth time or the endless stream of encouragement from your wingmen quickly becomes tiresome. It tempted me to turn the volume off entirely. I would have, too, if not for the occasional useful mission information provided through chatter from your wingmen. Some way to shut up the useless speech – or at least subtitles – would have been greatly appreciated here.

Technical flaws also sap away the enjoyment of the game. As missions become longer and more repetitive, crashes seem to occur more often on certain video cards, especially GeForce cards. Though this might not affect you, the unlucky gamers with the wrong



**REALISM BE DAMNED** Even if explosions can't really happen in space, they still look pretty good in *Starlancer*.

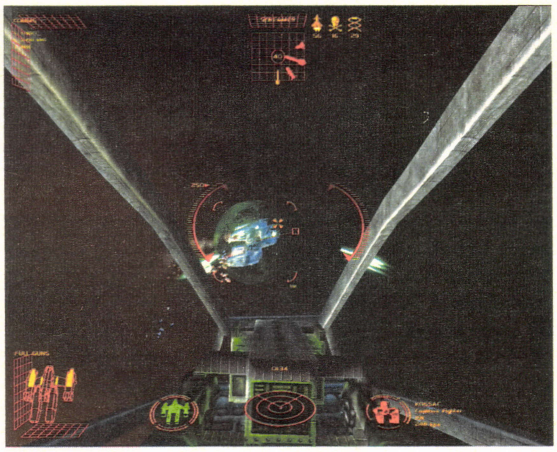


**BYE-BYE BIRDIE** The bigger they are, the harder they fall. This capital ship eats it, thanks to my good shooting.

configuration could soon be tearing out their hair in a fit of rage. Nothing is as frustrating as finishing a mission after the fourth try and having it crash during the closing cinematic!

These crashes are not helped by the idiotic computer-controlled pilots that pass for your allies and enemies. Most of your wingmen have a hard time shooting down stationary targets, and not only will you take a lion's share of the kills, but you'll have to scramble around saving their asses in many missions. But don't worry, you won't have much trouble shooting down the brain-dead enemy pilots.

The pilots' ineptitude, especially in escort missions, combined with the occasional system crash can keep you stuck on a difficult mission for hours and hours. And, because most missions include scripted cinematic sequences that you can't bypass, you may be forced to sit through them every time you replay a mission. Can you say, "Hell on Earth"? Of course you can.



**SITTING DUCKS? FISH IN A BARREL?** Any way you put it, these stupid AI pilots are a breeze to kill.

***Starlancer* is by no means a perfect game, but it is a shipload of fun.**



**GOLDEN RING** Come on... come on... I've almost got my lock on this enemy. When I finally get it, he'll be as good as dead.

### Multiplayer Madness

The game's focus is on the 24-mission-long, single-player campaign. However, *Starlancer* has a good selection of multiplayer options as well. Other than the usual deathmatch, there are tag games and a Nuclear Strike mode, in which you try to be the first to collect the necessary keys to nuke everyone else. The most original of the multiplayer games, however, is a cooperative game that allows up to four players to play through all the campaign missions together.

Even with all the game's flaws, the simplicity of making beautiful ships go ka-boom and the lure of seeing what the next cut-scene has in store will probably have you coming back again and again. *Starlancer* is by no means a perfect game, but it is a shipload of fun nevertheless.

WE KICKED BUTT THEN; WE'LL DO IT AGAIN

## SCREW HISTORY

### THE REAL FLYING TIGERS VS 45TH VOLUNTEER SQUADRON TIGERS

The real **Flying Tigers vs. the 45th Volunteers** — who has more bite?



FLYING TIGERS



45TH VOLUNTEERS

| | FLYING TIGERS | 45TH VOLUNTEERS |
|---|---|---|
| CRAFT | Curtiss P-40E with a 1150hp Allison V-1710 engine, six .50-cal. machine guns | Spacecraft with multiple laser, tachyon, and plasma cannons |
| OPERATION AREA | Backwaters of China, with few supplies and poor conditions – as tough as it got | Neptune and Saturn, flying from state-of-the-art interstellar carriers |
| ENEMY | Fought against the Japanese invaders in China, scoring more than 200 kills with very few losses | Fighting alongside the Japanese against the Russians and Chinese. One pilot can score more than 200 kills |
| PERKS | Cool jacket, great stories to use to impress chicks, and a movie about them that wasn't directed by Chris Roberts | The ability to shoot down hundreds of brainless Coalition scum. Chris Roberts sticking with what he does best |

## Tech Specs

**PROCESSOR & MEMORY**

| | |
|---|---|
| MINIMUM SPEC | 200MHz & 32MB |
| PREFERRED SPEC | 300MHz PII & 64MB |
| MINIMUM INSTALL | 300MB HD SPACE |

**GRAPHICS SUPPORT**

| | |
|---|---|
| Software Rendering | ✔ |
| Direct3D | ✔ |
| 3dfx | ✘ |
| OpenGL | ✘ |

**AUDIO SUPPORT**

| | |
|---|---|
| EAX (SBLive!) | ✔ |
| A3D | ✘ |

**MULTIPLAYER OPTIONS**

| | |
|---|---|
| MULTIPLAYER SUPPORT | |
| Maximum number of players: PC 1, LAN 8, Internet 8 | |
| CD FOR EACH PLAYER? | Yes |
| MIN. INTERNET CONNECTION | 28.8kps |

## The Verdict — Starlancer

**HOW THEY COMPARE**

- **Tachyon: The Fringe** — Extremely open-ended gameplay and a story filled with plot twists.
- **Independence War** — The flight model involves realistic physics and is enjoyable.
- **Descent: Freespace 2** — Fairly intelligent wingmen, and the first game to do capital ships really well.
- **Starlancer** — Fun, fast, simple. It's good but very standard fare.
- **Wing Commander III** — The best of the *WC* series, this one finally got space combat right.

**GRAPHICS**

■ The best graphics in a space sim to date! Huge asteroids and capital ships are offered.

0 1 2 3 4 **5**

**SOUND**

■ The sounds of battle are well done, but the repetitive voice chatter can easily get on your nerves.

0 1 2 **3** 4 5

**MULTIPLAYER**

■ The ability to play through the single-player game with your friends is great fun.

0 1 2 3 **4** 5

**PROS:** Fast action; great graphics; a simple premise that requires little thought; good training missions.

**CONS:** Cliché story; bad voice acting; various crashes; occasionally repetitive missions are frustrating.

**OVERALL**

Despite some glitches, an overall solid release from the company formed by the creators of *Wing Commander*.

**3** OUT OF 5

★ ★ ★ ☆ ☆

# Worthy of Your Pledge

Microsoft's **ALLEGIANCE** breaks the space-sim mold and gets five stars in the process

**FACT FILE** ■ PUBLISHER **Microsoft** ■ DEVELOPER **Microsoft Research** ■ GENRE **Space Sim/Strategy** ■ PLAYERS **100+** ■ ESRB RATING **Everyone** ■ PRICE **$34.99**

**GAME GLANCE**

- 1 Solar system
- 1 Sought-after resource
- 4 Warring factions
- 100+ Players
- Countless screams in the night

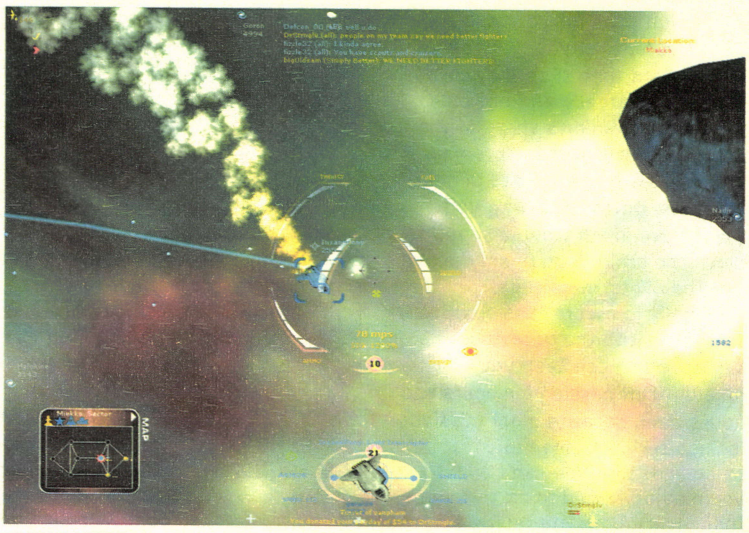
incite Golden Award

***Allegiance* is a unique game from Microsoft that combines the depth and intelligence of strategy games with the adrenaline-pumping action of space-based flight sims.**

*By Di Luo*

Earth is gone, annihilated by a wayward asteroid. The remnants of humanity are stranded in space. Still, they refuse to work together, dividing themselves into four warring factions, all competing for limited resources. To which of these would you pledge your allegiance?

Almost all space-combat sims since the days of *Elite* and *Wing Commander* take an action-movie approach, focusing on the exploits of one pilot in a solitary struggle against hordes of enemies. Interspersed between the dozens of missions and countless hours of missile-dodging dogfights are cut-scenes that propel the story forward and give you a sense of the big picture.



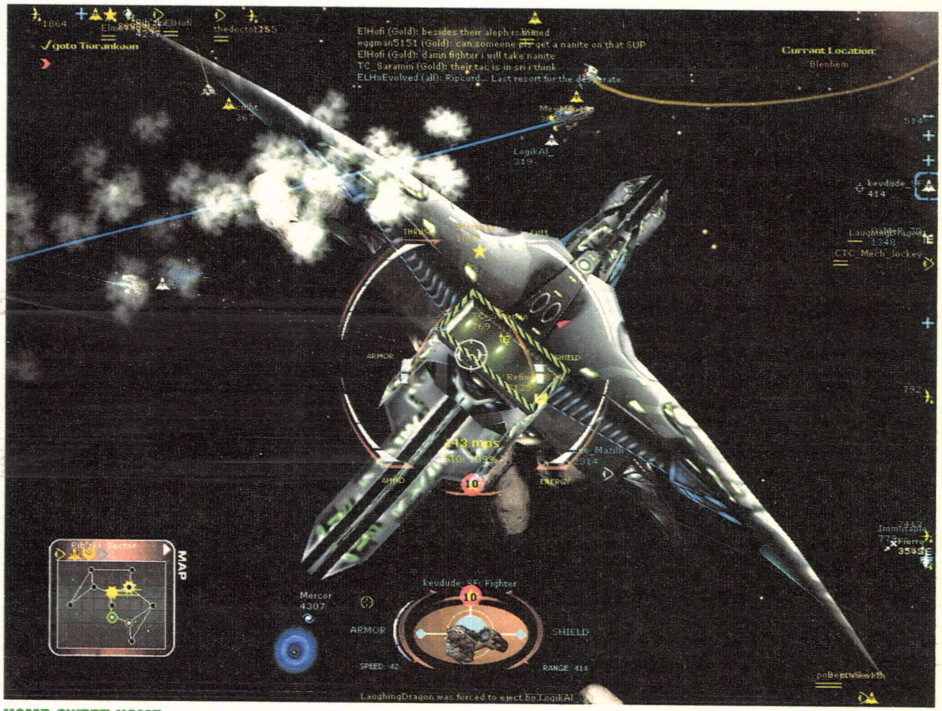
**DUEL IN SPACE** An interceptor attempts to strafe around its target – "attempts" being the operative word here, as those smoke trails are just for show.

*Allegiance,* from Microsoft, shatters this stereotype with an addictive blend of action, strategy, and massively multiplayer capabilities. Other than six short training missions, gameplay in *Allegiance* is entirely multiplayer. After logging onto a server, you must pick a squadron and join it as either a squad leader or pilot.

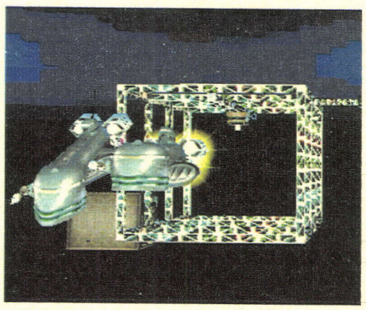
## Of Kings and Pawns

*Allegiance* often doesn't hinge on the flying skills of individual players. Instead, much depends on the commander's ability to juggle his various forces, enforce discipline with his players, and outwit the enemy. The commander must collect resources, develop new weapons, and build bases, with the ultimate goal of entirely annihilating the enemy.

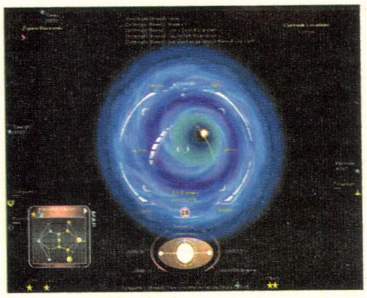
Even if you create the perfect strategy, your squad mates may




**HOME SWEET HOME** Bases serve as the homes of pilots and ships. If they're all gone, you lose. Hence, it's important to have enough fighters around to protect them.



**IMPENDING DOOM** A couple of capital ships on their maiden voyage.

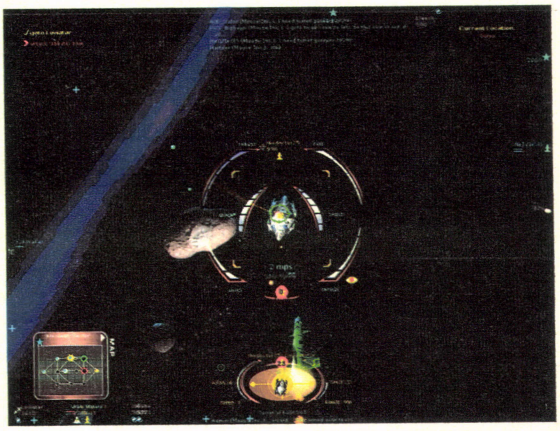


**ALEPH, NOT ALF** Alephs link the sectors of space, allowing travel between them.

decide to completely ignore your orders and go sightseeing in their favorite ships instead. Without cooperation from them or a sense of team play, you'll end up as space debris. Luckily, the commander has access to displays of everything his troops can see, and commanding them can be easily accomplished in an interface similar to that of most real-time strategy games out there these days.

Compared with the flood of responsibilities facing a commander, the pilot has it easy. All you have to do is follow orders and fly to the best of your ability. However, nothing in the game prevents you from joyriding in your favorite fighter or indulging yourself with a bit of senseless slaughter, so the success of your team will also require self-discipline and patience for more mundane jobs. The glory of flying a capital ship may be intoxicating, but without the "lowly" turret gunners or escorts, your expensive cruiser is a sitting duck.

Unlike most other games in the genre, *Allegiance* takes inertia into account. That means ships won't be able to turn on a dime, and it's possible to go in one direction while facing another, creating a "strafing" effect in space. This, along with customizable load-outs for your ship and expendable ammunition, makes combat a refreshing experience that requires good planning as well as quick reflexes.

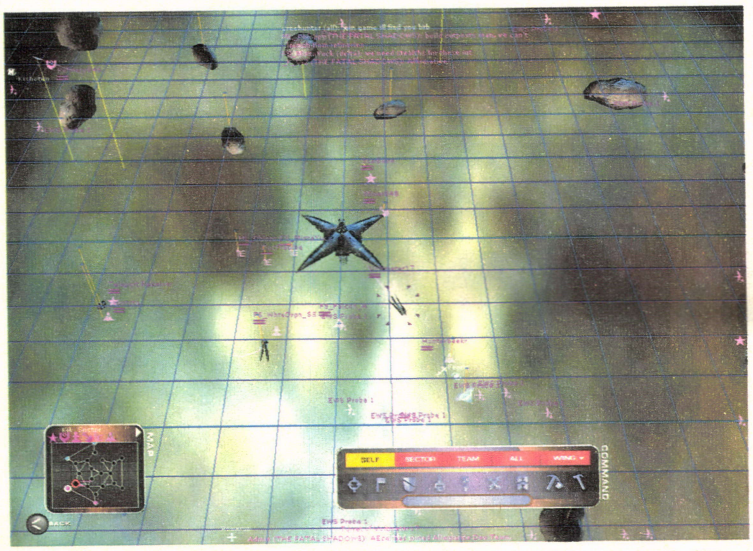


**CERTAIN DEATH** Talk about caught between a rock and a hard place! This enemy is sure to eat it once that missile lands.

**The glory of flying a capital ship may be intoxicating, but without the "lowly" turret gunners or escorts, your expensive cruiser is a sitting duck.**

In what is a departure from most massively multiplayer games, servers for *Allegiance* are available on The Zone for free, and you can create your own servers for up to 32 players as well. If you want to splurge, though, you can pay a fee of $9.95 per month to play on Zone servers that can accommodate a few hundred players in a single game as well as keep track of your stats.

With its gorgeous graphics and innovative gameplay, *Allegiance* is a product with few flaws. Its steep learning curve may make you crave a few more training missions or even some single-player ones, but what better place is there to hone your skills than on the battlefield against live opponents?



**COMMAND DECISIONS** The command view allows you to make a quick assessment of the situation. Fans of real-time strategy games should be familiar with this view.

## Tech Specs

**PROCESSOR & MEMORY**

| | |
|---|---|
| MINIMUM SPEC | 200MHz & 32MB |
| PREFERRED SPEC | 266MHz PII & 64MB |
| MINIMUM INSTALL | 270MB HD SPACE |

**GRAPHICS SUPPORT**

| | |
|---|---|
| Software Rendering | ✔ |
| Direct3D | ✔ |
| 3dfx | ✘ |
| OpenGL | ✘ |

**AUDIO SUPPORT**

| | |
|---|---|
| EAX (SBLive!) | ✔ |
| A3D | ✘ |

**MULTIPLAYER OPTIONS**

MULTIPLAYER SUPPORT

Maximum number of players: PC 1, LAN 32, Internet 100+

| | |
|---|---|
| CD FOR EACH PLAYER? | Yes |
| MIN. INTERNET CONNECTION | 28.8k |

## The Verdict

**Allegiance**

**HOW THEY COMPARE**

**Allegiance**
Fast-paced dogfights and real-time strategy combined.

**Star Control**
Strategy as well as 2D arcade action in space. It's great fun.

**Tachyon: The Fringe**
Traditional single-player game along with an original multiplayer mode.

**WC Armada**
One of the first space sims with strategic elements.

**Wing Commander**
The space-combat game that effectively started the genre.

**GRAPHICS**

Beautiful nebulas and well-modeled ships. The vastness of space can be a bit bland at times, but it still looks good.

0 1 2 3 5 — **4**

**SOUND**

Nothing spectacular, though some of the voice acting for communications between players can be amusing.

0 1 2 4 5 — **3**

**MULTIPLAYER**

It's *Team Fortress* or *Tribes* in space with the addition of resource management. Nothing quite like it out there.

0 1 2 3 4 — **5**

**PROS:** Great team-play elements and multiplayer capabilities. The chaos and excitement is unparalleled.

**CONS:** The training missions aren't that useful, and a few single-player missions would have helped.

**OVERALL**

An original, refreshing game that gets away from the linear nature of space sims. Who needs cut-scenes?

**5** OUT OF 5

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

# Fun in the Fringe

Amongst a trio of space-combat competitors, **TACHYON: THE FRINGE** deserves your attention

**FACT FILE** ■ PUBLISHER **Novalogic** ■ DEVELOPER **Novalogic** ■ GENRE **Action** ■ PLAYERS **1-100+** ■ ESRB RATING **Everyone** ■ PRICE **$39.99**

**GAME GLANCE**

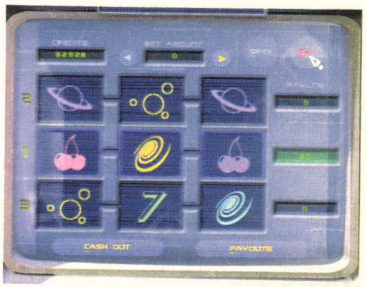
- 100+ Players per game online
- 11 Flyable ships
- 60+ Missions
- 2 Frontier factions
- 1 Very cool game

**Known for creating semiserious military simulations such as *Commanche 3* and *Delta Force 2*, Novalogic steps up to the space-combat sim plate for the first time and nearly hits one out of the park. *Tachyon: The Fringe* is a game space-combat fans shouldn't miss.**

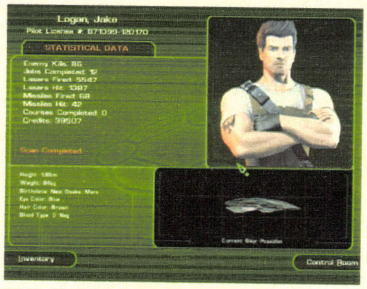
***By Steve Klett***

Deceit, betrayal, backstabbing, gambling, flirtatious babes, free enterprise, pirates and plot twists. That is what *Tachyon: The Fringe* is all about. Who woulda figured the edge of the explored universe could be so darn interesting?

You play the part of cocky bastard and all-around wise-ass, mercenary pilot Jake Logan. Unlike O.J., you're convicted of a crime you didn't commit and banished to the edge of the explored universe, which is known as Fringe space. In the Fringe there are few rules, and everyone's trying to stab each other in the back.

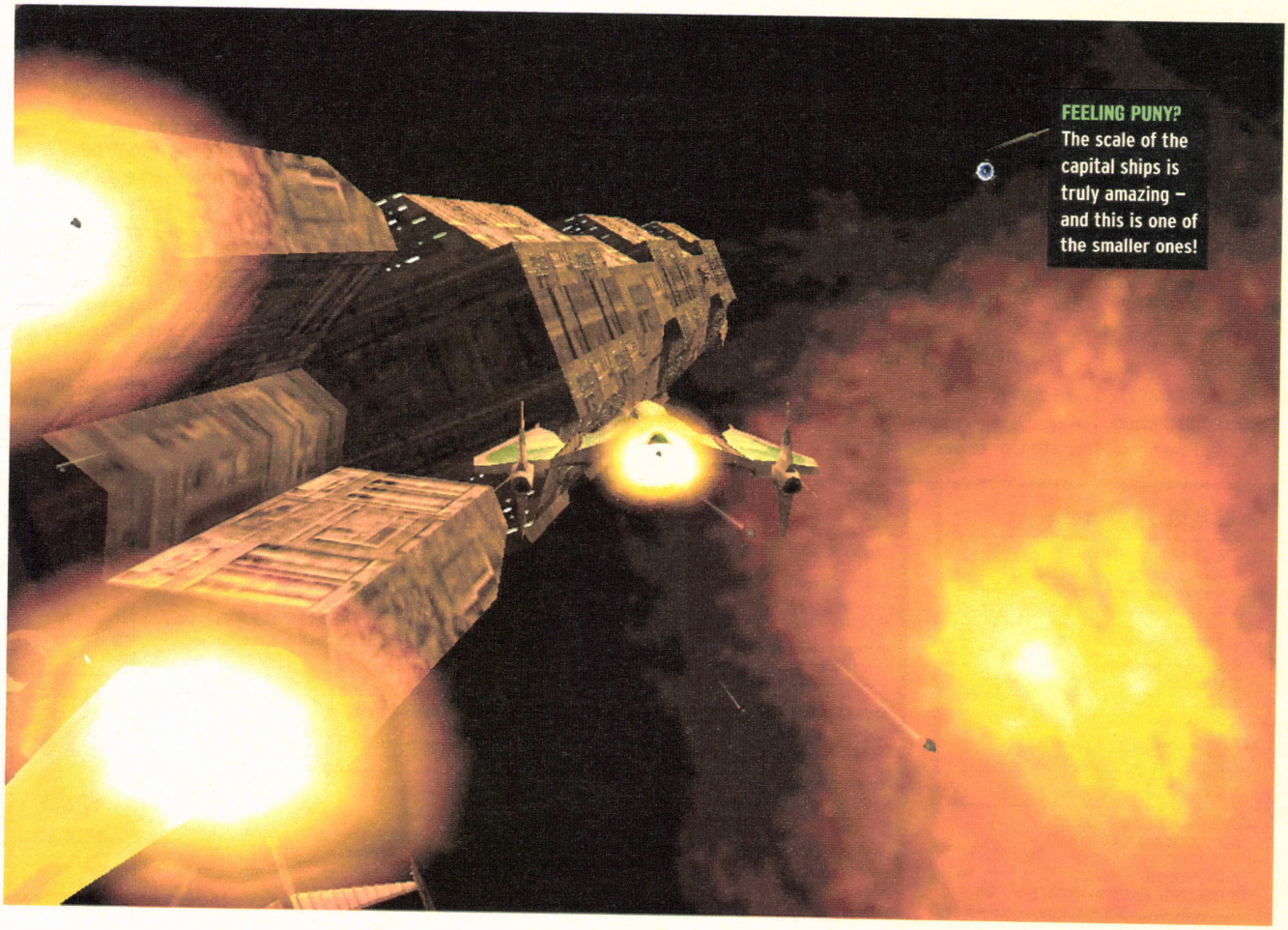



**GOT A QUARTER?** Don't forget to take a break from the fighting and hit the slots.

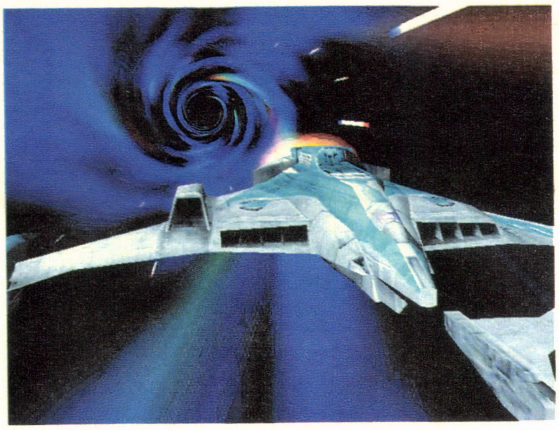



**COOL CUSTOMER** When Jake's not acting cool, he's trying to look cool. Nice stats.

Who framed you and why? How can you clear your name? And more important, how can you earn enough cash to upgrade this cow of a spacecraft you find yourself stuck in? It's up to you to find all the answers, but how?



**FEELING PUNY?** The scale of the capital ships is truly amazing – and this is one of the smaller ones!



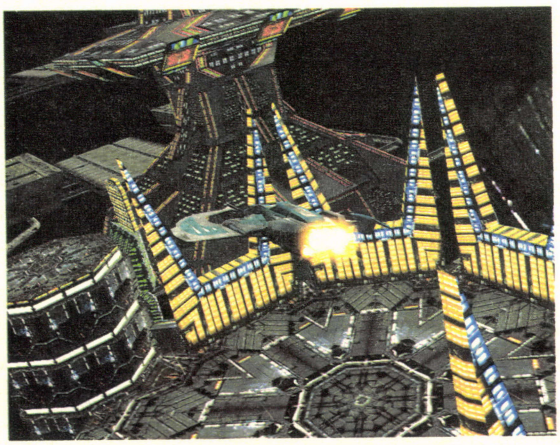
**ENOUGH ALREADY!** You'll see this scene far too often – thankfully, it's one of the few cut-scenes from which you can "escape."

### Lack of Linearity

You're hoping you can find the answers as you do what a mercenary does best – blow stuff up for cash! One of *Tachyon*'s coolest aspects is that you can select any mission, or "job contract," you wish from a list of those available at each of the starbases. You don't have to choose them in any set order, and as you complete more jobs you'll gain access to different areas of the universe, each of which has its own distinct flavor and job contracts. You jump among the different regions of Fringe space via Tachyon "jump gates," which allow you to get from point A to point B in a blink of an eye.

Better still, the story is open-ended in that the choices you make determine which of the game's two factions you side with – the corporate GalSpan or rebellious Bora. This in turn influences the game's outcome. You can also make

**The story is open-ended in that the choices you make determine which of the game's two factions you side with.**



**ENTERING LAS VEGAS** As you'd expect, starbase New Vegas is alive with lights and slot machines – and no, there are no hookers.

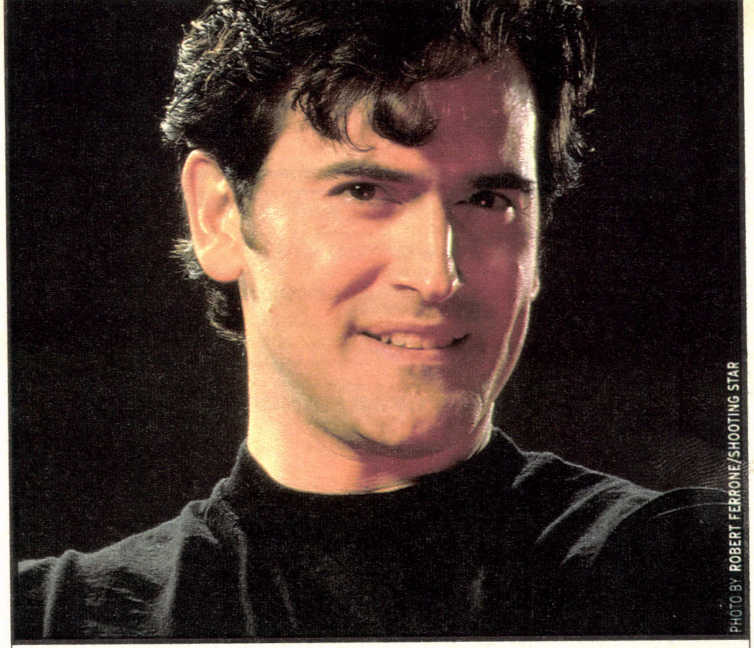


PHOTO BY ROBERT FERRONE/SHOOTING STAR

FROM EVIL DEAD TO DEADLY EVIL

## SMARMY BASTARD

Interstellar wise guy Bruce Campbell talks about his voice work in *Tachyon: The Fringe* and his other projects

Already the star of cult films (The *Evil Dead* trilogy) and cheeky TV adventure shows *(Xena: Warrior Princess, Hercules: The Legendary Journeys,* and *Jack of All Trades)*, Bruce Campbell is now making the leap into games. THQ may have a game en route based on *Evil Dead,* but the man himself is starring in Novalogic's space epic, *Tachyon: The Fringe.* We dropped the sarcastic star a line in his New Zealand hotel room to find out how much of a player he really is.

**First off, when did you first meet up with *Evil Dead* Director Sam Raimi? And, more important, did you ever have any doubts about starting a career in acting?**

We were in an acting class together in 1975. I followed up his lame-o pantomime with an equally lame one. And afterward we became quick friends. But no, we didn't have doubts. Like Rocky Balboa, we just wanted to go the distance. We had a simple goal of working our ass off on our first film, and it succeeded. Never underestimate hard work in any business.

**You usually keep hidden away from the Hollywood scene, since you're filming TV shows in New Zealand. But before really getting into the industry, we hear, you used to live with Raimi and actress Holly Hunter.**

I briefly shared a place with Sam, Holly, Frances McDormand [*Fargo*], and Kathy Bates [*Misery*]. Pretty wacky, huh? As far as talking about who the slob was, there's not much more I can tell you. But about being in New Zealand almost half the year: I am the original gypsy, spending half my time between hotel rooms. I'm fine with it, but I don't recommend it overall. The highs are pretty high, but the lows are...well...pretty damn low.

**Is there any one medium you like working in over the others — TV, film, game CD-ROMs, books?**

I like the whole ball of wax, the entire creative process. It keeps the pipes clean and the engine primed. Man, I'm just full of metaphors, aren't I?

**Many of the roles you choose seem to be smarmy and sarcastic. Is this a conscious decision or just an extension of your own personality?**

Both, but you can leave the smarmy out of it. That's never something I like to promote. Sarcastic? Yes, people can be very sarcastic, and we shouldn't deny it as long as it's used as a fun way to present the truth that everyone already knows.

**Is there a role you would like to play that you haven't already done? Spider-Man, maybe, since Raimi is directing that film?**

Hell, no! Sit in makeup for three hours a day – are you crazy? I never play the "what if?" game any more. I did it for a brief period and it was a crashing bore.

**Out of all the catchy lines you've said in movies over the years, which is**

Continued on page 95

## Test Center — Tachyon: The Fringe

### UP AND RUNNING

**INSTALLATION**

+ Installation is easy
+ No install glitches
- Requires 500MB hard-drive space

**ACCESSIBILITY**

+ Good manual
+ Multiple difficulty levels
+ Includes keyboard template

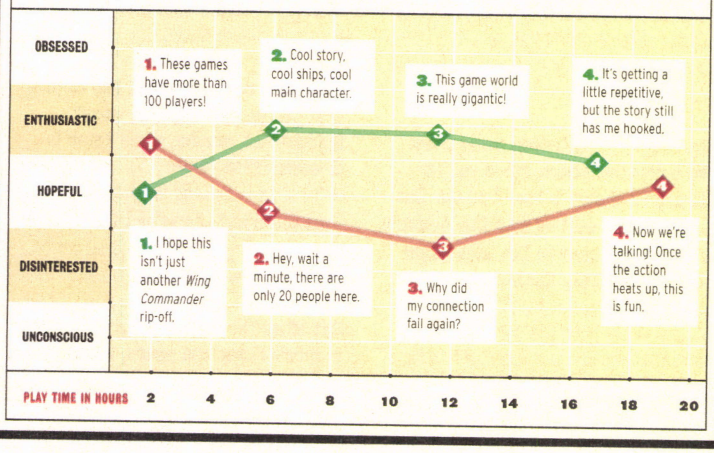
### GRAPHICS PERFORMANCE CHART

| | | Pentium 166 | | Pentium II 233 | | Pentium II 350 | | Pentium II 450 | | AMD Athlon 700 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **SYSTEM RAM ▶** | | 32 | 64 | 32 | 64 | 32 | 64 | 64 | 128 | 64 | 128 |
| **Voodoo2** Diamond Monster 3D II | 640 x 480 | | | | | | | | | | |
| | 800 x 600 | | | | | | | | | | |
| | 1024 x 768 | | | | | | | | | | |
| **Voodoo3** 3dfx Voodoo3 3000 | 640 x 480 | | | | | | | | | | |
| | 800 x 600 | | | | | | | | | | |
| | 1024 x 768 | | | | | | | | | | |
| **Rage 128** Rage Fury | 640 x 480 | | | | | | | | | | |
| | 800 x 600 | | | | | | | | | | |
| | 1024 x 768 | | | | | | | | | | |
| **Matrox G400** Millennium G400 | 640 x 480 | | | | | | | | | | |
| | 800 x 600 | | | | | | | | | | |
| | 1024 x 768 | | | | | | | | | | |
| **TNT 2** Diamond Viper V770 Ultra | 640 x 480 | | | | | | | | | | |
| | 800 x 600 | | | | | | | | | | |
| | 1024 x 768 | | | | | | | | | | |
| **GeForce 256** Guillemot 3d Prophet | 640 x 480 | | | | | | | | | | |
| | 800 x 600 | | | | | | | | | | |
| | 1024 x 768 | | | | | | | | | | |
| **Savage 2000** Diamond Viper II | 640 x 480 | | | | | | | | | | |
| | 800 x 600 | | | | | | | | | | |
| | 1024 x 768 | | | | | | | | | | |
| **Software** | 640 x 480 | | | | | | | | | | |
| | 800 x 600 | | | | | | | | | | |
| | 1024 x 768 | | | | | | | | | | |

WHAT IT MEANS — Forget it! — Runs poorly — Acceptable — Runs with ease

### THE INTEREST CHART

*Tachyon's* **single-player** gameplay is free-form and not at all linear, which is refreshing. The **multiplayer** Base War battles are a blast.




***Tachyon* has a pleasing graphical style that's all its own— from the textures and explosions to the ship and starbase designs.**

allies or enemies out of various supporting characters, such as the starbase governors.

And it's a blast to travel through the Fringe as the likable Jake Logan. His irreverent attitude toward anything serious or any type of authority is portrayed via quips and one-liners that, while a bit odoriferous in their cheesy nature, are quite often a hoot.

Jake's voice is supplied by none other than Bruce Campbell of *Xena: Warrior Princess* and *Evil Dead* fame. While some of the more generic and repetitive lines grow tiresome over time, Bruce turns in an entertaining performance.

Graphically, *Tachyon* comes up a bit short in the "smoke and mirrors" category when compared with *Starlancer*. That is, the special effects merely suffice rather than astound. That said, *Tachyon* has a pleasing graphical style that's all its own – from the textures and explosions to the ship and starbase designs – and an awesome sense of



**JAKE LOGAN**

**Who the hell is he?** This bad-ass space mercenary is your character, and his voice is supplied by none other than *Evil Dead*'s venerable hero, Bruce Campbell.



**GREAT BALL OF FIRE!** I'll light the fire, you get the marshmallows... another pirate scum goes up in flames.

scale. Capital ships are truly massive, and some of them allow you to fly through trenches in their superstructure, as seen in *Star Wars*.

**It's a blast to travel through the Fringe as the likable Jake Logan.**

### Not All Roses

Where *Tachyon* trips up a bit is with some vagaries in mission design. Sometimes it's needlessly difficult to figure out what to do next; docking can be frustrating; and it's not always clear that the decision you're about to make is important to the storyline.

In addition, while the game offers some impressive multiplayer options over the Internet, you might encounter some difficulties actually connecting.

With the *Freespace 2*, *Allegiance*, and *Starlancer* trio also on store shelves, it will be easy for *Tachyon: The Fringe* to get lost in the shuffle. That would be a shame, as it holds its own with these games and has the potential to be a dark-horse success for developer Novalogic.

**BRUCE CAMPBELL** Continued from page 93

**your favorite?**
Definitely "Gimme some sugar, baby," from *Evil Dead*. Sometimes I'll see quotes lifted and used for everything from books to video games. It's mildly annoying from a creative standpoint, but I'm glad overall that the lines were worth imitating.

**If someone ever picked a fight with you, how would you handle it?**
I'd walk away in a New York minute. On-screen personas and real life are very different. Hell, I wear socks with my sandals.

**You seem pretty plugged into computers. You've even worked on other games. Do you play many?**
I go online, but I don't do the gaming thing. Not sure why. Maybe it's because in my spare time, I don't need any more fantasy.

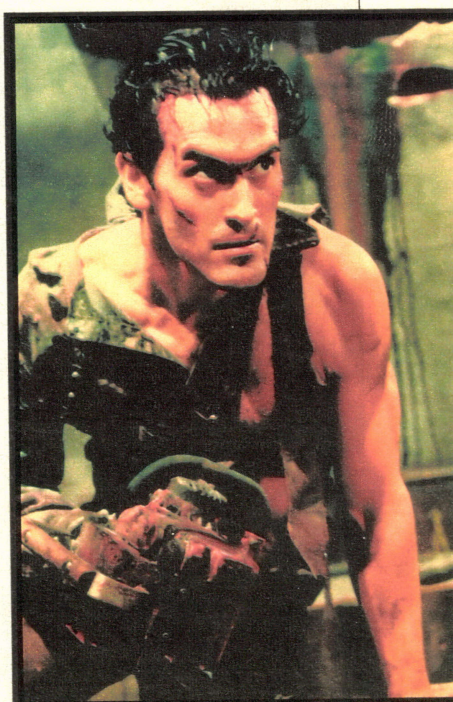
**Speaking of games, your work on *Tachyon* isn't the first CD-ROM you've worked on. Do you think they are getting closer to the point of being able to tell a story like a movie?**
Heck, yeah – I'm sure with each passing year, we'll come closer to Joe Blow Mechanic being able to make a film all by himself, and it won't cost much at all. The empowerment implications are pretty big.

**How much input do you have for working on the Jake Logan character you play in *Tachyon?* Do you also contribute to the game?**
I followed their script, because someone has to have the big picture. I did embellish as we went, but I left it up to them whether they used it or not. We'll see what they do. They were totally cool to work with.

**You've been in the driver's seat for a couple films, but if you had control of a game, what would it be like? And would you star in it?**
Not necessarily. I'd like to first learn the technical side of it, because that will teach me what the parameters and limitations are in the format. I'd also do a more reality-based game. The whole fantasy thing can get a little stale sometimes.

**What would you say to our readers about *Tachyon: The Fringe?***
Play it – the lame factor is very low. It's a huge world that they have created, truly epic, and I think that's what players are looking for. That's about as impartial as I get.

PHOTO COURTESY OF SHOOTING STAR



Looking mean and lean, Campbell strikes one of his famous poses.

## Tech Specs

**PROCESSOR & MEMORY**

| | |
|---|---|
| MINIMUM SPEC | 200MHz & 32MB |
| PREFERRED SPEC | 300MHz PII & 64MB |
| MINIMUM INSTALL | 500MB HD SPACE |

**GRAPHICS SUPPORT**

| | |
|---|---|
| Software Rendering | ✔ |
| Direct3D | ✔ |
| 3dfx | ✘ |
| OpenGL | ✘ |

**AUDIO SUPPORT**

| | |
|---|---|
| EAX (SBLive!) | ✔ |
| A3D | ✔ |

**MULTIPLAYER OPTIONS**

| | |
|---|---|
| MULTIPLAYER SUPPORT | |
| Maximum number of players: PC 1, LAN 16, Internet 100+ | |
| CD FOR EACH PLAYER? | Yes |
| MIN. INTERNET CONNECTION | 28.8kps |

## The Verdict

**Tachyon: The Fringe**

**HOW THEY COMPARE**

**Tachyon: The Fringe**
Huge capital ships and starbases, open-ended gameplay, and high replay value.

**Independence War**
More similike, with realistic physics and more challenging gameplay.

**Descent: Freespace 2**
Large fleet battles and capital ships, smarter wingmen.

**Starlancer**
Wing Commander-style gameplay and stellar graphics.

**Wing Commander III**
Fast dogfighting action with hordes of enemies to blast.

**GRAPHICS**
High on style, low on technical bells and whistles. The graphics get the job done, nothing more.
0 1 2 3 4 5 — 4

**SOUND**
Lame battle music, decent battle effects/ships' sounds; good use of 3D effects; good voice acting.
0 1 2 3 4 5 — 4

**MULTIPLAYER**
Two distinct and fun game options, but hindered by a clunky interface and connection problems.
0 1 2 3 4 5 — 3

**PROS:** Humorous, open-ended mission and story structure; huge gameworld and ships!

**CONS:** Missions are needlessly vague at times; few online opponents at press time; graphics only adequate.

**OVERALL**
A surprisingly entertaining and solid first effort for Novalogic in this genre. Worth your cash.

**4** OUT OF 5

★★★★☆

# As Real As It Gets

**ROGUE SPEAR: URBAN OPERATIONS** delivers the challenge *Rogue Spear* vets are ready for

**FACT FILE** ■ PUBLISHER **Red Storm Ent.** ■ DEVELOPER **Red Storm Ent.** ■ GENRE **Action/Strategy** ■ PLAYERS **1-8** ■ ESRB RATING **Teen** ■ PRICE **$19.99**

**GAME GLANCE**

- 8 New multiplayer maps
- 2 Minicampaigns
- 4 New weapons
- 5 Classic maps
- 1,000+ Sudden deaths

**Fans of *Rogue Spear* get exactly what they want in *Urban Ops:* more multiplayer features and one helluva challenge.**

***By Steve Klett***

Playing a game like *Soldier of Fortune* made me want to run out and join the Special Forces to go see the world, meet interesting people, and shoot them full o' holes. *Rogue Spear: Urban Operations* made me want to run for cover every time I heard a loud noise. This is hands down the most realistic combat experience available on the PC.

*Urban Ops'* biggest draw is its extreme level of suspense – I can't tell you the number of times this game made me jump out of my seat. Death comes suddenly, oftentimes without any warning at all, and it can make your heart skip a beat. You can lose your head each time you poke it around a corner.



**GANG-BANGED** I got him! No, I got him! Did not! Did too! Sometimes even Special Forces operatives revert to their inner child. Especially when it comes to taking credit for a kill.

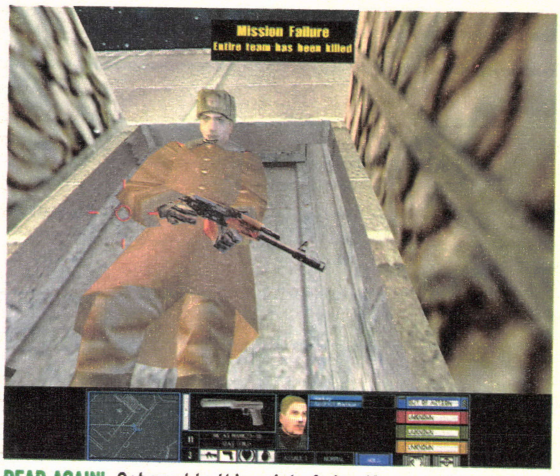
## Where's the Beef?

That said, *Urban Ops* was a disappointment initially. There are just two single-player minicampaigns, and with just five missions included in each, that descriptor could not be more accurate. The second campaign is comprised of five "classic maps" from *Rainbow Six,* so there are just five new single-player maps – not many, even for an add-on pack.

Thankfully, multiplayer steps in and saves the day with eight new, very diverse maps that run the gamut from a spooky graveyard to a bunker complex and training maze. All are very well suited to team-oriented multiplay, which is what the *Rainbow Six* series is all about for many players. We're not talking *Quake III* Capture the Flag here; we're talking hardcore cooperative play. If you don't cover your bud's back and he yours, you're in a body bag.

If you're new to the *Rainbow Six* experience, don't think you can run

***Rainbow Six* fans have been crying for the custom mission feature for a while now.**




**DEAD AGAIN!** Get used to this point of view if you want to play *Urban Ops* like it's some sort of *Quake* retread.



**THE GLORY** Helping a damsel in distress is but one of your jobs. Avert those eyes, soldier!

out and buy this game and then jump into online games and start fragging away. You'll be quickly humbled if you do. Most of the players you'll compete against in *Urban Ops* games online have been playing the *Rainbow Six* games for a while, are used to real teamplay tactics, and are damn good.

### Here's the Beef!

Thankfully, the new custom mission feature will help you rise to the *Urban Ops* online challenge. You can now play any of the *Rogue Spear* and *Urban Ops* missions one by one. (You must attempt campaign missions in an actual campaign first to unlock them.) You can also adjust a number of variables, such as difficulty, number of terrorists, and game type.

There are six game types in all, including Lone Wolf, which is a blast. It puts you in the boots of a lone operative you must then guide through a host of bad guys to a safe extraction zone. This is very difficult – particularly if you turn off auto aim and dial up the number of terrorists. The enemy AI is better this time around: The computer-controlled terrorists will spot you quicker, shot you sooner, run to sound alarms, and even toss a grenade or two in your face.



**HUT-HUT! HUT-HUT!** You watch my back, and I'll watch yours. Playing cooperatively online is blast!

**If you don't cover your bud's back and he yours, you're in a body bag.**

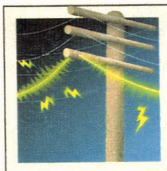
*Rainbow Six* fans have been crying for the custom mission feature for a while now, and it has finally been implemented. It adds a ton of replay value to the game. As in *Rogue Spear*, here you get a mission editor to create your own missions from scratch.

In addition, *Urban Ops* is far more mod-friendly than previous *Rainbow Six* titles. (See sidebar at right.) A new interface allows you to select, activate and deactivate, and prioritize installed mods. This too is welcome: Managing mods in *Rogue Spear* was a cumbersome process.

While a longer single-player campaign would have been nice, and Internet play can be unstable on The Zone and Mplayer, *Urban Ops* is well worth its modest admission price.



**THAT'S GOT TO SUCK** This Saddam look-alike was no match for my brand of MP3 fun. He should've given up without a fight.



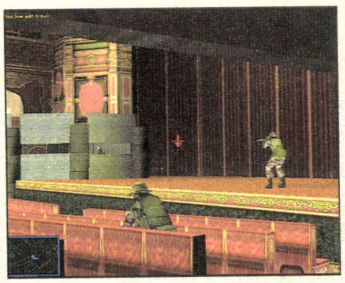
### IT'S ONLINE!

Where to shop for the **best user-created freebies**

Like *Rogue Spear, Urban Operations* includes an editor that will let players modify the existing maps in the game, as well as tweak weapons and create new online-only maps. So you can expect to find all sorts of **free mods and weapons** online by the time you read this.

To get you started on your search for the ultimate user-created weapons and battlefields, check out our **Complete Online Gaming Guide** for this issue of *incite PC Gaming* at **www.incite.com/onlinegamingguide**. Remember to check all downloaded files for viruses before running any missions you get from the Internet, as some people may want to try their own hand at cyberterrorism.

Also: Want to find out how our **military forces deal with combat in urban areas** in the real world? Go to **www.geocities.com/Pentagon/6453/** for the full story, including extensive tactical documents that can help you hone your *Urban Ops* game.



■ Get new maps such as GravediGGa's Pavarotti's Playhouse free online.

## Tech Specs

**PROCESSOR & MEMORY**

| | |
|---|---|
| ■ MINIMUM SPEC | 266MHz & 32MB |
| ■ PREFERRED SPEC | 300MHz PII & 64MB |
| ■ MINIMUM INSTALL | 300MB |

**GRAPHICS SUPPORT**

| | |
|---|---|
| ■ Software Rendering | ✔ |
| ■ Direct3D | ✔ |
| ■ 3dfx | ✘ |
| ■ OpenGL | ✘ |

**AUDIO SUPPORT**

| | |
|---|---|
| ■ EAX (SBLive!) | ✘ |
| ■ A3D | ✘ |

**MULTIPLAYER OPTIONS**

| | |
|---|---|
| ■ MULTIPLAYER SUPPORT | |
| Maximum number of players: PC 1, LAN 8, Internet 8 | |
| ■ CD FOR EACH PLAYER? | Yes |
| ■ MIN. INTERNET CONNECTION | 28.8k |

## The Verdict

## Urban Operations

**HOW THEY COMPARE**

■ **Rogue Spear**
The best team-oriented shooter available so far.

■ **SWAT 3**
The next best, but it needed multiplayer games out of the box.

■ **Urban Operations**
A must-have add-on for hardcore *Rogue Spear* vets.

■ **Rainbow Six**
The game that started it all. *Rainbow Six* brought realism to the FPS genre.

■ **Spec Ops II**
Another, less robust, take on this young – but flourishing – genre.

**GRAPHICS**

■ *Rogue Spear's* graphics are suitable to the task at hand, but far from awe-inspiring.

0 1 2 4 5 **3**

**SOUND**

■ Excellent weapons, environment, and use of ambient/dramatic music.

0 1 2 3 5 **4**

**MULTIPLAYER**

■ Improved in many areas – custom mission options are a blast and will keep the game on your hard drive for months.

0 1 2 3 4 **5**

**PROS:** Extremely suspenseful and challenging; *Rogue Spear* vets will appreciate the multiplayer focus.

**CONS:** Short campaigns, it's dated technically, and lag is a significant issue with online play.

**OVERALL**

For the price, *Rogue Spear: Urban Operations* is a no-brainer for *Rainbow Six* fans.

**4** OUT OF 5

★★★★

# Online Lizard Kings

*EverQuest* addicts get a vast new continent to explore in **EVERQUEST: THE RUINS OF KUNARK**

**FACT FILE** ■ PUBLISHER **Sony Computer Entertainment** ■ DEVELOPER **Verant** ■ GENRE **RPG** ■ PLAYERS **1,000+** ■ ESRB RATING **Teen** ■ PRICE **$37.99**

**GAME GLANCE**

- 25 New zones
- 1 New race
- 1,000+ New items
- 1,000+ Monsters
- 1 Ruined social life

incite Golden Award

**A complex, massive game, *EverQuest: The Ruins of Kunark* will open your eyes to online gaming's potential. Its shear breadth of gameplay possibilities will provide hundreds of hours of role-playing ecstasy – just don't forget to poke your head into the real world on occasion!**

*By Christian Svensson*

It is with good reason that *EverQuest* is the most popular massively multiplayer online RPG. For now it is the best example of the genre and provides amazing value for the money (despite the $10 monthly charge).

Better still, there isn't much to complain about – and the game is just so damn addictive that any problems are easily ignored. Verant managed to include some dramatic improvements to *EverQuest* with *The Ruins of Kunark* expansion pack. And, as if *EverQuest*'s existing world of Norath wasn't large enough, Kunark adds more monsters, items, quests, and lands to explore.




**BIG BLADE, BIG SMITE!** Everyone takes a second to admire the giant's blade.




**DUNGEON DWELLING** What's a good RPG without lots of dungeons to explore?

The new continent of Kunark has some very obvious differences from the rest of the lands of Norath. First of all, the *EverQuest* graphics engine has been given a swift kick in the ass. While it's not quite up to the graphic standards of *Unreal Tournament* or *Quake III*, higher polygon counts for all objects and higher resolution textures make Kunark look like a whole new world! Trees sway in the breeze, characters have far more variety in their animations, and these graphics features are put to good use in the design of the zones as you explore the world of the Iksar – a new, playable race of lizard people.

## Make Way for the Iksar!

Standing slightly taller than humans, the Iksar race is extremely agile and at home in the water. They make for particularly potent Monks and Necromancers but may also make fair Shadowknights and Warriors. Despite their evil appearance, Iksar do not get on with the Trolls, Dark Elves, or Ogres of the old continents. And those dark races are not welcome in the Iksar city of Cabilis.

Despite its differences, Kunark fits seamlessly with the rest of the world of Norath. (Those of you who don't own the original game, fret not: It comes included with Kunark at no additional charge.) Boats convey adventurers from the old




**LEAPIN' LIZARDS** As if the Iksar weren't enough, other lizardly races, like the Sarnaks, bring up the cold-blooded population on the continent of Kunark. Looks like this chap is bowlegged. Wonder why?



**I AM THE LIZARD KING** Jim Morrison shows up in the strangest places.

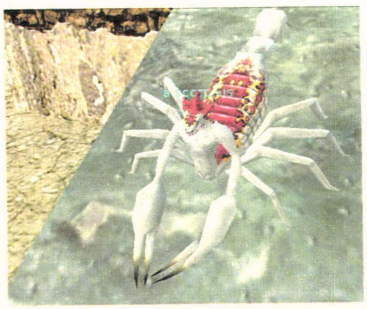



**STRANGE DAYS INDEED** I said, your mother's ugly and she dresses you funny – now whatcha gonna do about it, punk? Thmite me with your pixthe duthst?

continents to Kunark. And higher-level characters may purchase teleportation spells to get there more quickly.

As many of you know, the world of *EverQuest* is divided into discreet zones. The ones on Kunark are far larger than those on the old continents. So, while there may be only 25 new zones (bringing *EverQuest*'s total to 93) the increase in geography and "things to do" is actually quite significant.

By and large, many of the new zones are geared toward the more experienced adventurer. The monsters populating the continent tend to be more difficult to slay than those inhabiting the same level in the rest of Norath, and they respawn more quickly after they're killed. These challenges are tempered by the fact that the monsters also carry far better loot with them: There is a ton of powerful new weapons, armor, jewelry, and other items these creatures may drop.



**SCORPIONS WORLD TOUR** From Norath to Kunark, he rocks your world.

## Going Up?

Finally, for those of you who couldn't get enough of the original and have maxed-out your characters to level 50, Kunark actually allows players to go 10 levels higher. Many new spells, abilities and defenses are offered to those who can attain these lofty levels. However, these ranks do not come without penalty: You will surely have to quit your job, leave your significant other, forget your pets/kids, and become one with *EverQuest*.

**The graphics engine has been given a swift kick in the ass.**

Now, despite all of the additions and improvements Kunark brings, the primary factor that made *EverQuest* a difficult proposition for many gamers still remains. Its online nature means you will have contact with literally hundreds of other players. In fact, your survival and advancement often depends on how you interact with them.

But it's not all "nice" in *EverQuest*. If you decide you want to layeth the smacketh down on some mouthy Elf, there are certain servers that are almost complete free-for-alls, where you can kill other players as much as you'd like. Good hunting!



**GIANT KILLING** Stand still so I can bash you, dammit! Why won't you stand still! Arggggh!

## Tech Specs

**PROCESSOR & MEMORY**

| | |
|---|---|
| MINIMUM SPEC | 200MHz & 64MB |
| PREFERRED SPEC | 400MHz PII & 128MB |
| MINIMUM INSTALL | 400MB HD SPACE |

**GRAPHICS SUPPORT**

| | |
|---|---|
| Software Rendering | ✗ |
| Direct3D | ✓ |
| 3dfx | ✓ |
| OpenGL | ✗ |

**AUDIO SUPPORT**

| | |
|---|---|
| EAX (SBLive!) | ✓ |
| A3D | ✗ |

**MULTIPLAYER OPTIONS**

| | |
|---|---|
| MULTIPLAYER SUPPORT | |
| Maximum number of players: Internet only 1,000+ | |
| CD FOR EACH PLAYER? | No |
| MIN. INTERNET CONNECTION | 28.8Kps |

## The Verdict

### The Ruins of Kunark

**HOW THEY COMPARE**

**EverQuest: Kunark**
Amazingly deep and flexible, with stunningly designed worlds.

**Asheron's Call**
Microsoft's online RPG has good technology but lacks polish.

**Diablo II**
Its emphasis on action and character development is amazingly satisfying.

**Ultima Online**
The granddaddy of multiplayer online RPGs is showing its age.

**Diablo**
This game was a phenomenon when it came out a few years back.

**GRAPHICS**
The new models and textures are a welcome improvement but still look a little dated.

0 1 2 3 5 **4**

**SOUND**
Most effects are adequate, and the game supports 3D audio well. But there are still a few bugs.

0 1 2 4 5 **3**

**MULTIPLAYER**
There is no other way to play. It's easily one of the most engaging, if not time-consuming, ways to use the Net.

0 1 2 3 4 **5**

**PROS:** Amazingly ambitious game concept; nearly limitless hours of play; brilliant balancing of classes and races; lots of variation within the world.

**CONS:** Incredibly time-consuming and complex; poor documentation.

**OVERALL**

*EverQuest* was already the ultimate in online RPGs. If you're thinking of entering an online world, buy this.

**5** OUT OF 5

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

# Rattle Rattle Thunder

## **NASCAR 2000** doesn't make it to the finish line in record time

**FACT FILE** ■ PUBLISHER **EA Sports** ■ DEVELOPER **Stormfront Studios** ■ GENRE **Racing** ■ PLAYERS **1-8** ■ ESRB RATING **Everyone** ■ PRICE **$29.99**

**GAME GLANCE**

- 30 Drivers
- 18 Official tracks
- 5 Fantasy road courses
- 1 King: Richard Petty
- 1,000+ Left turns

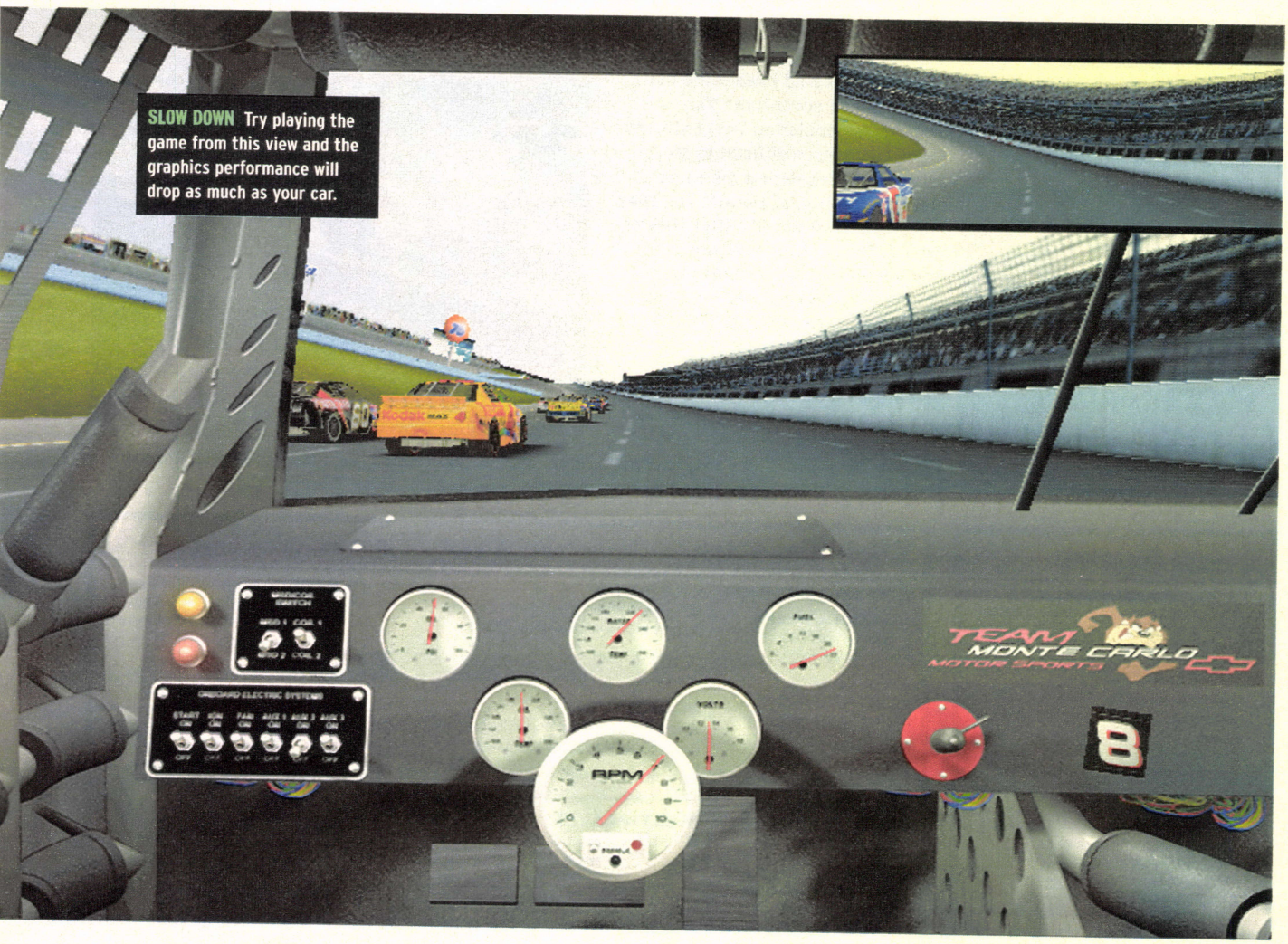
**It's difficult to critique a NASCAR racing game without comparing it to the king. No, not Richard Petty, although you can race against him in *NASCAR 2000*. The king of NASCAR games is Sierra's *NASCAR Racing 3*. And when compared with that king, *NASCAR 2000* can't keep up the pace.**

*By Tasos Kaiafas*

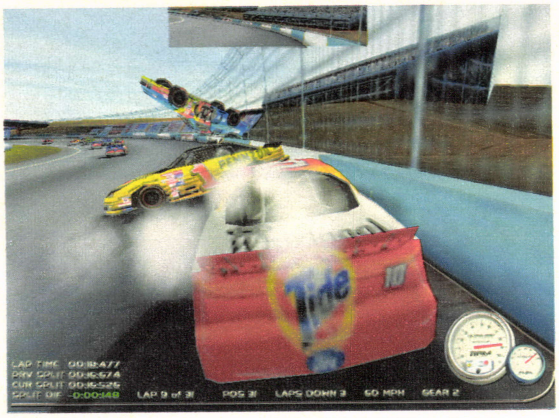
For those who don't remember, last year's version of *NASCAR 2000* was called *NASCAR Revolution*. It was a flawed and buggy game that should have stayed in the shop longer.

Although *NASCAR 2000* is a big improvement over *NASCAR Revolution*, there are still a few minor problems that need to be worked out. It's sort of like when you hear weird noises coming from your car that you don't fix right away because you think you can live with them. But after a while they start to drive you crazy, and you just have to take your car in to a mechanic to have everything checked out. In fact, using that analogy is probably the best way to review *NASCAR 2000*.

**Mechanic:** Can I help you?
**Owner:** I think there's something wrong with my race-car game. Can you take a look and let me know what you think?
**Mechanic:** What seems to be the problem?
**Owner:** A few things. It starts when I put the CD-ROM in the drive. Instead of starting the game, a window pops up asking me if I want to reinstall the game. Of course I don't want to reinstall it! I want to play the damn thing!
**Mechanic:** Uh-huh. Does the window go away?
**Owner:** Yeah, but only after I hit the No button.
**Mechanic:** There's no way to fix that one. You'll just have to get used to it.
**Owner:** Oh. Well, there's also this other thing where the other cars on the track keep bumping into me.
**Mechanic:** They can't hold their line?




**SLOW DOWN** Try playing the game from this view and the graphics performance will drop as much as your car.



**STACK 'EM UP** The other drivers in *NASCAR 2000* can't drive, to put it rather bluntly. Hence, you crash constantly.

**"I think there's something wrong with my race-car game."**

**Owner:** Right. Their line, they can't hold it. But then, I have a hard time keeping my line too. The only way I could see them coming would be if my car had one of those nifty three-way mirrors.
**Mechanic:** You don't?
**Owner:** No! And that's if I could even drive from inside the car.
**Mechanic:** You can't?
**Owner:** No! It really runs bad when I do that. I have to ride on the roof!
**Mechanic:** Really? How do you reach the pedals?
**Owner:** With my feet, but that's not the problem. I'm not asking for much here;



**MELTS IN YOUR MOUTH** The yellow M&M on the bumper *should* be scared of me.




**FLASHLIGHT TAG** Night racing on one of the short tracks is one of the best things about *NASCAR 2000*. Just be prepared for a whole lot of bump and grind.

I just want to drive my car like any other normal person.
**Mechanic:** You can't do that from the roof.
**Owner:** I know! But that's not all.
**Mechanic:** What else?
**Owner:** The shocks. The car bounces like a rusted-out old Lincoln when I hit even the smallest bump.
**Mechanic:** No problem. We can just tighten her up a bit.
**Owner:** No, you can't. I already tightened them up all the way. It's still bad. I almost had a really bad crash just the other day because of it.
**Mechanic:** You should be more careful.
**Owner:** You should fix it! Can you?
**Mechanic:** Yes and no. You're just going to have to get used to driving from the roof.
**Owner:** Oh.
**Mechanic:** And there's not much else I can do with the shocks if you've already tightened them all the way. You'll just have to drive a little slower and let the other cars pass you.
**Owner:** Well, that's not an option! And they seem to bump into me a lot anyway, and I can't see them coming.
**Mechanic:** Nothing I can do for you there. You're better off selling the game and buying a new one.

Which is very good advice. And the new one you should buy is Sierra's *NASCAR Racing 3,* which received our highest rating in the January issue. It provides a much better feel for how a real NASCAR should drive, and you can race against a full field of cars online. It isn't perfect, but at least you won't have to suffer through all of these annoying little noises.

## Tech Specs

**PROCESSOR & MEMORY**

| | |
|---|---|
| MINIMUM SPEC | 233MHz & 32MB |
| PREFERRED SPEC | 266MHz PII & 32MB |
| MINIMUM INSTALL | 300MB HD SPACE |

**GRAPHICS SUPPORT**

| | |
|---|---|
| Software Rendering | ✔ |
| Direct3D | ✔ |
| 3dfx | ✘ |
| OpenGL | ✘ |

**AUDIO SUPPORT**

| | |
|---|---|
| EAX (SBLive!) | ✘ |
| A3D | ✘ |

**MULTIPLAYER OPTIONS**

| | |
|---|---|
| MULTIPLAYER SUPPORT | |
| Maximum number of players: PC 1, LAN 2-8, Internet 2-4 | |
| CD FOR EACH PLAYER? | Yes |
| MIN. INTERNET CONNECTION | 33.6k |

## The Verdict — Nascar 2000

**HOW THEY COMPARE**

**NASCAR Racing 3**
Like Richard Petty, this game is the king of NASCAR sims.

**NASCAR Legends**
This is serious stuff if you like extreme realism and old muscle cars.

**NASCAR 2000**
Not a bad game, but it still needs some time in the garage.

**NASCAR Racing 2**
The king's predecessor, this game set a new standard for racing sims.

**Email Games NASCAR**
Still can't get enough NASCAR? Try this email turn-based game.

**GRAPHICS**
They look sufficient, but you'll sometimes experience jitters when a lot of cars are on the track.
0 1 2 3 4 5 — **3**

**SOUND**
Cars rumble and sound realistic, and the announcers sound good but repetitious.
0 1 2 3 4 5 — **4**

**MULTIPLAYER**
In this category, more than four players have to be supported online these days. Works well otherwise.
0 1 2 3 4 5 — **2**

**PROS:** Has that special EA Sports polish, and the fantasy tracks can be fun.

**CONS:** Doesn't have every official track, you can't create your own team, the other cars crash into you too much, and there's no rearview mirror.

**OVERALL**
You'd better back her back into the garage, boys. She still needs a lot of tweaking before she's ready to roll.

**3** OUT OF 5

★ ★ ★ ☆ ☆

# Fishing Frenzy!

**TROPHY BASS 4** and **CHAMPIONSHIP BASS** are "hawg" heaven for lunker hunters



**FACT FILE**

**TROPHY BASS 4**
- **PUBLISHER** Sierra
- **DEVELOPER** Dynamix
- **GENRE** Sports/Sim
- **PLAYERS** 1-100
- **ESRB RATING** Everyone
- **PRICE** $29.99

**CHAMPIONSHIP BASS**
- **PUBLISHER** Electronic Arts
- **DEVELOPER** Electronic Arts Seattle
- **GENRE** Sports/Sim
- **PLAYERS** 1-8
- **ESRB RATING** Everyone
- **PRICE** $19.99

**GAME GLANCE**

**TROPHY BASS 4**
- 25 Lakes
- 4 Bass pros
- 1,000+ Tackle combinations
- 30 Catchable species of fish
- 3 Regional tournaments

**CHAMPIONSHIP BASS**
- 6 Lakes
- 0 Bass pros
- 4 Play modes
- 50 Levels
- 1,000+ Monster bass

**The dog days of summer are drawing near, and that makes us think of... bass fishing! So, we turned to Sierra's *Trophy Bass 4* and Electronic Arts' *Championship Bass* for some lunker huntin' on the PC.**

***By Steve Klett***




**ON CROWDED POND** You can finally see other boats on the lake in *Trophy Bass 4* – and no, you can't ram them no matter how many times you try. Maybe in *Trophy Bass 5*.

Sierra's *Trophy Bass 4* takes a dramatically more realistic approach to the sport than EA's offering. *Trophy Bass 4* boasts 25 real-world lakes (15 are new; 10 are from previous *Trophy Bass* games) and video-fishing tips from four actual bass pros, including Denny Brauer, with whom we hit a real lake for a taste of some big-time fishin'. (See "Gone Fishin,'" following these reviews). The somewhat goofy tips are actually useful, if you can bear to watch 'em. They may even improve your real-world fishin' skills.

You can hit the water for a casual/practice fishing trip on any lake of your choosing and under any conditions you wish. Or you can simply hit Quick Fish and let the computer put you on a lake of its choosing under random conditions, which include time of year, temperature, weather, and water clarity. But the real hook is that you can compete for the big money against dozens of skilled pros in a yearlong season in any of the three new regional tournament circuits.

And the competition – at least on the higher skill levels – is tough! A good day on the lake for a real pro is around 15 pounds for a five-fish limit, and you'll be hard-pressed to do that in the game – especially under adverse conditions such as heavy rain and/or heavily stained water. The bass behave pretty realistically too. They're more or less where they should be during specific times of the season, and fishing techniques you'd use in the real world will work here, such as flippin' a jig-'n'-pig (a jig-head lure with a pork trailer attached) in heavy cover.

Ironically, as realistic as the rest of the game is, the actual "catching" can be a bit silly. Fights go on for ridiculously long amounts of time – 10-plus minutes in game time – and even small fish will easily break your 15-pound test line if you try to bring them in too quickly. As real-world experience and the fishing shows attest, it takes but a few minutes for pros to land the biggest of fish. Perhaps the fish in *Trophy Bass 4*'s lakes are on steroids or spawn near nuclear power plants?

Still, if you're heavily into bass fishing or simply want to learn more about the sport, there is no better choice than *Trophy Bass 4*.




**KISS MY BASS** It can take a long time, but catching a lunker like this one is worth the effort – and maybe big bucks – in *Trophy Bass 4*.

## Championship Bass

EA, as is its style, has taken the flashier approach to bass fishing,

electing to bring you more of an arcade flavor with *Championship Bass.* Think of Sega's *Get Bass* in the arcade or *Bass Fishing* on the Dreamcast and you'll be close to getting the picture. *(Trophy Bass 4,* in comparison, is more like *Bass Landing* on the PlayStation.)

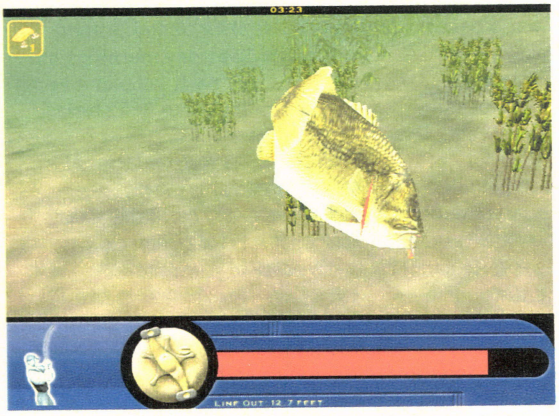
The graphics are fins and tails above those found in *Trophy Bass 4,* and the bass are by and large bigger and badder too. There are just six lakes, but they're huge and literally brimming with secret holes and lots of monster fish. Whereas you'll catch realistic amounts and sizes of fish relative to the lake you're on in *Trophy Bass 4,* in *Championship Bass* you'll catch many "hawgs" (bass that are 10 or more pounds).

*Championship Bass'* biggest claim to fame is its arcade-style, level-based Bass Challenge. This mode puts you in a series of 50 levels, each of which presents a different challenge. In one you might have a single lure, a fixed position on the lake, and just five minutes to catch the most fish. In the next you might have 10 minutes, a dozen lures, and the option to move your boat. You'll need to catch bonus bass (fish with red, green, or blue eyes) to win extra time and special lures, reveal lunker bass, or give your boat or casting ability a boost.

**Perhaps the fish in *Trophy Bass 4*'s lakes are on steroids or spawn near nuclear power plants?**




**BASS BONANZA!** A red-eyed bass isn't necessarily spawned by Satan – catch one and you'll get a special power-up that may help you beat the level in *Championship Bass.*




**BOSS HAWG** In *Championship Bass* there are plenty more lunkers where this 'un came from – where's the dynamite bonus?

The levels are diverse, progressively more challenging, and a blast to play. It's just too bad there's not a good force-feedback fishing controller for the PC!

But don't let the arcade nature of *Championship Bass* fool you; its fish can be stubborn and tough to catch. And they'll rattle your nerves with false strikes and return attacks.

With more lakes, stronger tournament and career modes, and better video performance (the game can be sluggish on systems that far exceed the requirements), *Championship Bass* could be the biggest fish in the PC pond. As it stands, *Championship Bass* is an extremely promising – and entertaining – first effort that you, like us, may like for totally different reasons than you like *Trophy Bass 4.*

### And the Winner Is...

We have to give both games four stars based on different features. If you want a simlike, realistic game, go for *Trophy Bass 4.* If you're more into arcadelike fun, *Championship Bass* will be more up your alley.

## Trophy Bass 4

### Tech Specs

**PROCESSOR & MEMORY**

| | |
|---|---|
| MINIMUM SPEC | 166MHz & 32MB |
| PREFERRED SPEC | 300MHz PII & 64MB |
| MINIMUM INSTALL | 150MB HD SPACE |

**GRAPHICS SUPPORT**

| | |
|---|---|
| Software Rendering | ✔ |
| Direct3D | ✔ |
| 3dfx | ✔ |
| OpenGL | ✔ |

**AUDIO SUPPORT**

| | |
|---|---|
| EAX (SBLive!) | ✘ |
| A3D | ✘ |

**MULTIPLAYER OPTIONS**

MULTIPLAYER SUPPORT
Maximum number of players: PC 1, LAN 100, Internet 100

| | |
|---|---|
| CD FOR EACH PLAYER? | Yes |
| MIN. INTERNET CONNECTION | 28.8kps |

### The Verdict

**PROS:** Very realistic fish behavior – until the fight, that is; lots of lakes and good fishing holes to choose from.

**CONS:** Unrealistic fights; career mode spans only a single season; graphics aren't too slick.

**OVERALL**

The best option for getting a feel for professional bass fishing. If you're into realism, this is for you.

**4** OUT OF 5

★★★★☆

## Championship Bass

### Tech Specs

**PROCESSOR & MEMORY**

| | |
|---|---|
| MINIMUM SPEC | 200MHz & 32MB |
| PREFERRED SPEC | 266MHz PII & 64MB |
| MINIMUM INSTALL | 150MB HD SPACE |

**GRAPHICS SUPPORT**

| | |
|---|---|
| Software Rendering | ✔ |
| Direct3D | ✔ |
| 3dfx | ✘ |
| OpenGL | ✘ |

**AUDIO SUPPORT**

| | |
|---|---|
| EAX (SBLive!) | ✘ |
| A3D | ✘ |

**MULTIPLAYER OPTIONS**

MULTIPLAYER SUPPORT
Maximum number of players: PC 1, LAN 8, Internet 8

| | |
|---|---|
| CD FOR EACH PLAYER? | Yes |
| MIN. INTERNET CONNECTION | 28.8kps |

### The Verdict

**PROS:** Exciting gameplay and great price; the graphics outpace other fishing games'; diverse levels.

**CONS:** Superficial tournament mode; sluggish performance; hardcore fishermen won't like arcade feel.

**OVERALL**

A compelling, fresh take on the genre; if you're looking for more fishin' and less realism, this is the one.

**4** OUT OF 5

★★★★☆

# GONE FISHIN'

## *incite* spends a day on the lake with real-life **bass master Denny Brauer**

**BY STEVE KLETT**
PHOTOGRAPHY BY TOM HOPKINS

**There's a myth regarding bass fishing that anyone in the right conditions and with the right equipment can catch fish – after all, bass are stupid, right? There's also another myth that bass fishing is a sport for beer drinkers and couch potatoes – that it's not a "real" sport. After one day on the lake with renowned bass king Denny Brauer, witnessing his fishing prowess firsthand, we'd like to take a few moments to shatter those myths.**

Denny has been fishing for bass professionally for 20 years now, and is one of the most well known and successful fishermen on the bass-tournament circuit, if not the planet. He's won well over $1 million in the scores of tournaments in which he's fished, including the Bass Anglers Sportsman Society and Wal-Mart FLW Tour. And he's qualified for 16 Bassmaster Classics (one of which he won in 1998), which is regarded as the Super Bowl of bass fishing. Denny's also the first angler ever to be featured on a Wheaties box. (Yes, he eats them.) Sounds like a big-time sport to us!

I hopped a plane out to Osage Beach, Missouri, to fish with Denny on his home water, the Lake of the Ozarks (which you can fish yourself in *Trophy Bass 4*). Denny's son Chad, a rising star on the bass tournament trail himself, came along, and we had a front-row seat on Denny's personal $38,000 Ranger bass boat. Denny cast, flipped, and pitched a variety of lures (mostly jigs) with pinpoint accuracy. Flippin' a quarter-ounce jig under a dock is no easy task, but Denny made it look easy: He caught several hawgs during the course of the day, including one fish pressing 8 pounds!

**"You can get what you want out of games like *Trophy Bass* — just a fun experience or a fun learning experience."**

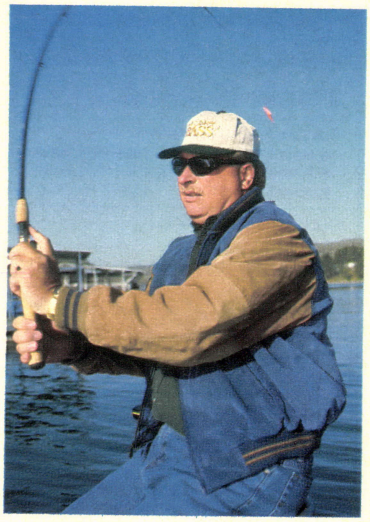
Denny was gracious enough to lend me his personal fishing rods–of which he had nine on this trip, each one rigged with a different fish-catching contraption. And I fished alongside him for a couple of hours, getting snagged on what seemed like every third cast, and flinging my jig into the water with a loud splash (whereas Denny's landed with a soft "plop" and barely a ripple). He was the Bass Zen Master, and I was the grasshopper.

Fishing from the same boat and using the same lure, rod, and line as Denny, and casting to the same fishy-looking holes, I had just one sure bite, which I missed setting the hook on. (A fish like that would have easily run 10 pounds!) Denny, meanwhile, landed nearly 20 pounds of bass. One of us knew what he was doing, and it sure wasn't me. You can see Denny in action yourself on his show, *The Bass Class With Denny Brauer*, which airs Saturday mornings on ESPN. For my part, I couldn't resist asking him for some fish stories.

**When you began your professional career there weren't many tournaments, and the money wasn't near what it is today. How did your family react to your decision?**

Well, my wife kinda wondered about it, to say the least, but she was supportive. And my mom thought I was just plain crazy. They don't think it's so crazy now!

**What's it like fishing in tournaments with your son Chad? Do you get**






**LUNKER HUNTER**
Denny catches fish like this on an hourly basis and – get this – *throws them back!*

**competitive with each other?**
We look at it as being in business together. We're very competitive, naturally, because you need to be. However, we really work together and trust each other. It's an advantage, I think. You get some fishing partners that sometimes hold back from the other for their own self-interest.

**What's the biggest bass you've ever caught in competition?**
I caught a 10-pound, 5-ouncer in Lake Seminole in Georgia. Someone else weighed in with a 10-pound, 7-ouncer that day, though, so I didn't even get credit for the big fish of the day. [Denny finished seventh in that particular tournament.]

**What's it like being on a box of Wheaties right up there with the likes of Michael Jordan?**
Well, I'm not sure you could say I'm up there with Jordan, but it's really good for our sport to get that recognition. Personally, it's great to get that kind of exposure; that kept me busier than any tournament I've won!

**You've appeared in Sierra's *Trophy Bass* series since the beginning, offering video tips to players. What do you think of fishing games, and are they a good tool for potential future pros?**
Yes, I think they can be a great learning tool, and not just for beginners! It can be a good refresher course for an experienced angler. The best thing is you can get what you want out of games like *Trophy Bass* – just a fun experience or a fun learning experience.

**You've designed several lures, including one of the world's top-selling jigs, the Denny Brauer Strike King Pro. Do you find it frustrating when someone else wins a tournament you're in with a lure you designed?**
No, actually it's great because you have to think about the royalties going up once word gets out and sales go up. Sometimes it helps to stay focused on the business side. [*Laughs.*]

**What's the biggest fish you've ever lost in a tournament?**
I had a fish on I couldn't even turn in a megabucks tournament in Texas. It could have been a 15-pounder, certainly, but in the morning I started saying it was 10 pounds, by lunch it was 15, and then it was 18 by dinnertime! [*Laughs.*]

**Do you ever keep a big bass to stuff and mount on your wall or to plop into the frying pan?**
I used to, but I rarely do anymore. I think that would be kind of like eating my retirement plan, don't you?

# Almost Ain't Enough

A highly anticipated franchise follow-up, **GUNSHIP!** won't please vets or newbies

**FACT FILE** ■ PUBLISHER **Hasbro Interactive** ■ DEVELOPER **MicroProse** ■ GENRE **Simulation** ■ PLAYERS **1-8** ■ ESRB RATING **Teen** ■ PRICE **$40.00**

**GAME GLANCE**

- 85 Weapon types
- 114 Different vehicles
- 4 Flyable helicopters
- 8 Cockpits
- 100+ Design blunders

***Gunship!* easily could have been a fantastic game, but instead it's a hastily produced me-too simulation that flips the bird to the heritage left by its forbears.**

*By Steve Klett*

MicroProse's *Gunship* for the Commodore 64 (1988) and subsequent *Gunship 2000* for the PC (1991) were simulation hallmarks. Unfortunately, *Gunship!* flies in the face of that tradition and delivers a heavy load-out of bugs and omitted features, and a pilot AI that will make you pull your hair out.

The Russian Bear is back from hibernation and is looking to eat up most of Eastern Europe, which forms the battlefront of World War III. American, British, and German forces team up to try to stop the Red onslaught – and you can fly for any of the four combatants!

Unfortunately, a squadron of irritating problems surface the moment you step into the cockpit. Missions begin with you already in the air, as opposed to on the tarmac at your base. Because helicopters are a relatively unstable flying machine, you begin each mission in instant chaos for the few seconds it takes to get your bird under control. And many of the keyboard commands simply don't work, which means if you try to rely on them you're dead meat. Even more frustrating, whenever you are forced to hand over the flying controls to the AI, the helicopter starts veering wildly off course like a bucking bronco. It's like the computer pilot has bees in its pants.

Then there are the incredibly unintuitive interfaces, the inadequate waypoint system, the confusing navigation, the overcomplicated order system...you get the point. If real U.S. Army pilots had to fly under these conditions, Saddam would have kicked our ass in the Gulf War.

It's clear that *Gunship!* was rushed through the assembly line. It's an insult to its heritage.

***Gunship!* delivers a heavy load-out of bugs and omitted features, and a pilot AI that will make you pull your hair out.**



**ANGRY DRAGONFLY!** This Apache is looking to get some revenge.




**BURN, BABY, BURN!** Three down, 300 to go. *Gunship!*'s battlefields certainly don't lack targets. And if you can get past the bugs to kill them, you're doing better than most.

## Tech Specs

**PROCESSOR & MEMORY**

| | |
|---|---|
| MINIMUM SPEC | 266MHz & 32MB |
| PREFERRED SPEC | 300MHz PII & 64MB |
| MINIMUM INSTALL | 150MB HD SPACE |

**GRAPHICS SUPPORT**

| | |
|---|---|
| Software Rendering | ✔ |
| Direct3D | ✔ |
| 3dfx | ✘ |
| OpenGL | ✘ |

**AUDIO SUPPORT**

| | |
|---|---|
| EAX (SBLive!) | ✘ |
| A3D | ✘ |

**MULTIPLAYER OPTIONS**

| | |
|---|---|
| MULTIPLAYER SUPPORT | |
| Maximum number of players: PC 1, LAN 8, Internet 6 | |
| CD FOR EACH PLAYER? | Yes |
| MIN. INTERNET CONNECTION | 28.8kps |

## The Verdict

**Gunship!**

**HOW THEY COMPARE**

- **Longbow 2** – Nearly two years old and still the king of helicopter sims.
- **Apache Havoc** – Flawed, but it gives you two beautiful birds to fly.
- **Comanche 3** – Good missions that kept you riveted on the gameplay.
- **Longbow** – This was *the* game before *Longbow 2* showed its face in the genre.
- **Gunship!** – Beautiful exterior belies ugly execution. This one could've been great.

**GRAPHICS**

■ Terrain and vehicle/helicopter graphics are top-notch. Too bad the gameplay doesn't stand up.

0 1 2 3 4 **5**

**SOUND**

■ Very good throughout, but could be better. Some of the sounds are quite unrealistic.

0 1 2 3 **4** 5

**MULTIPLAYER**

■ Hide-and-seek deathmatch in urban environs is a blast! May work with *Tank Platoon!*

0 1 2 3 **4** 5

**PROS:** Great to look at.

**CONS:** The gameplay is hopelessly bug-ridden; many cool features that are now standard in the genre are omitted; silly waypoint and ordering systems take the fun out of the missions.

**OVERALL**

Coulda been a contender with more tender loving care. As it stands, not even hardcore chopper simulation fans will like this one.

**2** OUT OF 5

★ ★



# A four-letter word worth repeating

**HUGE! You won't believe the HUGE selection of gaming gear you'll find at CompUSA®. Whether you're a Sega®, PlayStation®, Nintendo® 64, Game Boy® Color, Mac® or Windows® player, our HUGE gaming area is the place to go for the latest games and accessories. And CompUSA gives you a HUGE shopping advantage you won't find everywhere – all our games are at your fingertips, not locked behind a glass case or counter. So the next time you need a new game, gaming console or accessory, come to CompUSA. Gaming is HUGE here.**

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# Rumble Seats

**TESTED** **Intensor LX350 chair and subwoofer,** Imeron, www.imeron.com, $270
**BattleChair,** Interactive Seating, www.battlechair.com, $250 (with pad and arm rests, $380)



**ROCK 'N' ROLL** The BattleChair's solid, plastic-molded seat will have you shaking your butt more than a stripper on speed.

Some people (mostly hardware editors) will do just about anything to get a little extra oomph out of their gameplay. And few things are as satisfying as hearing your opponents getting lapped or the roar of your plane's engine as you peel off the tarmac.

So what better way to give that in-the-cockpit feel than having some bass-thumpin', butt-shakin' speakers planted firmly beneath you? That's why we grabbed a couple of plastic-molded chair boom boxes to simulate real life... and stimulate our posteriors.

The **Intensor LX350** chair yielded some satisfying results but for all the wrong reasons. You see, the speakers are positioned to shoot sound at you from... wait for it... the crotch. Granted, getting *blown away* in *Quake III: Arena* has never livened up a lonely Friday night quite like this. But c'mon, we've sat on broken-down, wooden park benches that were more ergonomic than this.

A simultaneously cool yet problematic issue is the compartmentalized nature of the Intensor. If you don't want the superheavy bass sound, chop 100 bucks off the price tag. Would you rather prop the chair on the ground? Just remove the base. As a result, the Intensor can be a little rickety. Prime example: playing *Quake III: Arena* almost landed us on the floor, but only because the base wasn't securely fastened. Problem No. 2 is that the sound (the reason you'd want to buy this wobbly seat in the first place) is muddy, and it feels more like some jerk is kicking the back of your chair.

The **BattleChair** is positioned at the opposite end of the spectrum. It is an entirely self-contained plastic-molded seat that is surprisingly easy on the butt as well as on the eyes. It even comes with an optional leather pad to really pamper yourself as you play.

It provides some impressive bass as well as good speakers that are placed exactly where your head should be when kicking back. But here's problem No. 1: If you're taller than 5-foot-10 (like yours truly), you may be in a spot of trouble. Apparently only people shorter than 6 feet can ride this e-ticket attraction. Okay, it still works if you're tall, but you'll just have to slouch as you sit and keep your head near the speakers at the "proper" height. The other problem is the



**RICKETY 'N' ROLL** You'll swear the Intensor LX350 is gonna shake you to pieces... when it isn't sonically crushing your crotch.

leather cushion. It isn't that comfortable, and, more important, it muffles some of that kicking bass. So we'd advise you to shed that lining.

With sore butts from these vibrating stools, we can now give you our collective thoughts: We feel violated. Who'd want this kind of treatment from playing a game? A hardcore gamer, a pervert, or in our cases, both. There is no standout winner yet, mostly due to price and the lack-of-comfort factor. But if you're hell-bent on having your rump shake to the beat as you play, then get the BattleChair. And hold on for the ride of your life.

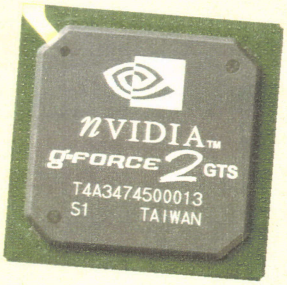
*–Darren Gladstone*

Intensor LX 350 chair and subwoofer
**Rating** ★★☆☆☆

Interactive Seating's BattleChair
**Rating** ★★★☆☆

## FIRST IMPRESSION

### GeForce2 GTS




At the closing bell for this issue, we got our hands on a GeForce2 GTS board, and while we didn't have the time to formally review it, we did want to throw in our initial two cents.

The GeForce2 GTS, from nVidia, is the next-generation follow-up to the GeForce GPU.

Simply put, the GeForce 2 GTS is a damn fast 3D card – of course; what would you expect? Based on benchmark results from 3DMark 2000, the GeForce2 board is about 20 to 50 percent faster than the original.

Still, based on nVidia's track record of doubling performance with every new chip, we were expecting more. Watch upcoming issues of *incite PC Gaming* and check out incite.com for more info on the GeForce2 GTS.

*–Kevin DaLuz*

# Mouse Traps

**TESTED**

**IntelliMouse Optical,** Microsoft
www.microsoft.com, $50
**ScrollPoint Pro,** IBM
www.IBM.com, $50




**LEFTIES SEE RED** Southpaw-friendly, Microsoft's mouse is on the money.

People are always trying to reinvent the wheel – or the USB mouse, as is the case here. But the biggest problem with ergonomic design is that you're hard-pressed to find a one-size-fits-all solution.

That said, Microsoft first unveiled a digitally precise optical mouse in October, the **IntelliMouse Explorer,** which we reviewed in our first issue. We raved that it had a lifetime warranty and no moving parts, but we failed to take something into account: Like most ergonomically minded mice, it was built for righties, so a bunch of southpaws lost out.

Now sporting a trimmed-down design, the IntelliMouse Explorer is great for righties *and* lefties. The mouse also has a sturdier shell, so it can take more punishment from those with short fuses and "extreme" gaming habits. Not only is it comfortable and strong, but it costs only $55, which is $20 cheaper than the original model.

We also grabbed IBM's **ScrollPoint Pro,** a righty-centric mouse. The ScrollPoint's slightly rubberized feel was certainly satisfying to the touch, and the raised angle accommodated our large mitts.

But it has a pencil-thin thumb button, which serves to frustrate more than facilitate, and the scroll point is extremely confusing. Maybe it's because we're biased and love using a mouse wheel, but this left-right scrolling control is difficult to use. This mousetrap will make gamers' fingers revolt.

*–Darren Gladstone*

IntelliMouse Optical
**Rating** ★★★★★

ScrollPoint Pro
**Rating** ★★☆☆☆




**RIGHT SAID DREAD** IBM's ScrollPoint Pro lets your fingers do the walking... uncomfortably.

# The Wringer

What do you do when computer companies send you **$13,000 worth of laptops?** Try to break them, of course!

We know how the game is played. You decide it's time to get a new laptop – but not just any laptop. You want a rig with more bells and whistles than Mardi Gras. But getting Mr. Middle Management to front the scrill needed to feed your techno jones is no easy task. To that end, you dig deep into your personal BS file to find every line in the book: impressive PowerPoint presentations! Spreadsheets that grind numbers like strippers looking for a good tip! **But we know the real reason you need a top-notch portable — and it ain't got nothin' to do with productivity.** You're looking to do everything from watching DVDs to playing games.

Of course, if you'd rather scroll through another riveting spreadsheet, be our guest. But if you're anything like us, you're always looking for another way to screw around on company time.

We called in some favors with our computer-making buddies to get our hands on four high-end notebooks with at least a Pentium III 500MHz CPU, 128MB RAM, and a 3D graphics chip so we could put them through the paces. The results of our little torture tests follow, but we will say for the record that we cringed on a couple of occasions while testing out these $3,000 to $4000 toys. So, as a little disclaimer, don't try this at home unless: A) You can con another computer out of your company, or B) The wife doesn't mind donning the fishnets to help finance a replacement.

*–Darren Gladstone and William O'Neal*

## Dell Inspiron 5000

**CPU** Pentium III 600MHz with SpeedStep **RAM** 128MB **HARD DISK** 12GB **DISPLAY** 15-inch **DVD** 8x DVD-ROM **USB** One port **GRAPHICS CARD** 8MB ATI Rage Mobility-P (3D) **INFO** www.dell.com **PRICE** $2,930



## Gateway Solo 9300 CX

**CPU** Pentium III 600MHz with SpeedStep **RAM** 128MB **HARD DISK** 12GB **DISPLAY** 15-inch **DVD** 6x DVD-ROM, **USB** Two ports **GRAPHICS CARD** 8MB ATI Rage Mobility-P (3D) **INFO** www.gateway.com **PRICE** $3,230



## Sony VAIO PCG-XG19

**CPU** Pentium III 650MHz with SpeedStep **RAM** 128MB **HARD DISK** 18GB **DISPLAY** 14.1-inch **DVD** 4x DVD-ROM **USB** One port **GRAPHICS CARD** 6MB NeoMagic MagicMedia 256XL+ (3D) **INFO** www.sony.com **PRICE** $4,000

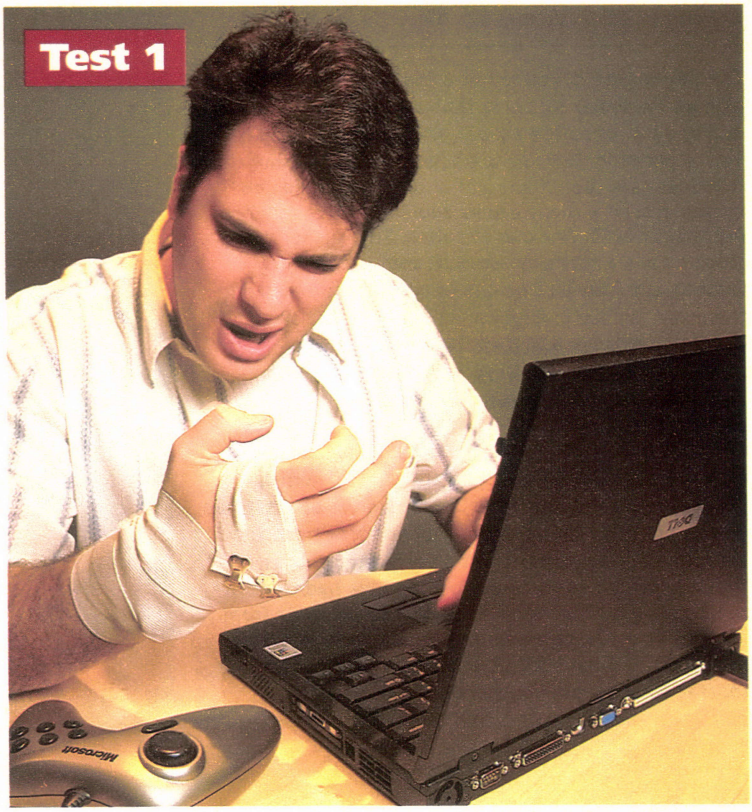


## Toshiba Satellite Pro 4280

**CPU** Pentium III 500 MHz **RAM** 128MB **HARD DISK** 6GB **DISPLAY** 15-inch **DVD** 6x DVD-ROM **USB** One port **GRAPHICS CARD** 8MB S3 Savage IX (3D) **INFO** www.toshiba.com **PRICE** $2,920



## Claw Control — The Gameplay Test




Screw productivity applications: You're all about playing games on your next road trip, right? We played everything from *Aliens vs. Predator Gold* and *Quake III: Arena* to *FIFA 2000* on notebooks, just make sure your medical coverage includes carpal tunnel treatments, thanks to the hell-inducing touchpads and control nipples. We took one for the team to spare you the agony. How soon did our hands cramp up?

**Gateway Solo 9300 CX:** 20 minutes. The touchpad is the worst invention ever – next to breast-reduction surgery, of course. The small buttons don't help, either, but the Solo does have two USB ports.

**Sony VAIO PCG-XG19:** 25 minutes. A purple touchpad is still a touchpad.

**Dell Inspiron 5000:** 30 minutes. Whither my beloved mouse? However, it does have nice, big, buttons.

**Toshiba Satellite Pro 4280ZDVD:** An hour. While the trackpoint nipple is a far cry from a mouse, it beats the hell out of a touchpad for pointing and clicking.

### THE WINNER

They all blow. Our advice is to bring a USB mouse along with you on the road. Our pick: Microsoft's **IntelliMouse Optical**, which we review in this issue.

## At the Movies — The DVD Test




PHOTOGRAPHY BY RAJAT GHOSH

Arguably the best reason to get a notebook is the ability to tune out that annoying person next to you on the plane or watch your own movies while on the road. We decided to grab the longest movie we could get our hands on, the three-hour and nine-minute opus *Titanic*, and try to watch the whole thing before the batteries crapped out... and without crying (sniff, sniff).

**Toshiba Satellite Pro 4280ZDVD:** Two hours, 10 minutes. "You can't keep us locked in here like animals. The ship's bloody sinking." The poor passengers are left forever locked below decks, left to drown like rats.

**Gateway Solo 9300 CX:** Two hours, 24 minutes. "Bloody Hell! I dropped the keys." Leo is about to become fish food... hey, we can dream, right?

**Sony VAIO PCG-XG19:** Two hours, 28 minutes. "I'm sorry that I didn't build you a stronger ship, young Rose." And the Sony's battery maker is sorry he didn't build a Duracell.

### THE WINNER

**Dell Inspiron 5000:** Two hours, 33 minutes. "Gentlemen, it has been a privilege playing with you tonight." Idiot band that plays as the ship goes down. Will Leo survive? He is soooo dreamy. Why won't he ever return my calls or letters?... Oh, sorry about that.

## Excuse the Mess — The Spill Test

The way we see it, you're not using a notebook to try to pick up the ladies by being that chic, supercool techno guy at a bar or coffee shop... and if you are, stop it. You're pathetic. Still, we are scientists and it's our duty to investigate the effects of hot and cold liquids on computers. How many drinks could each one take?

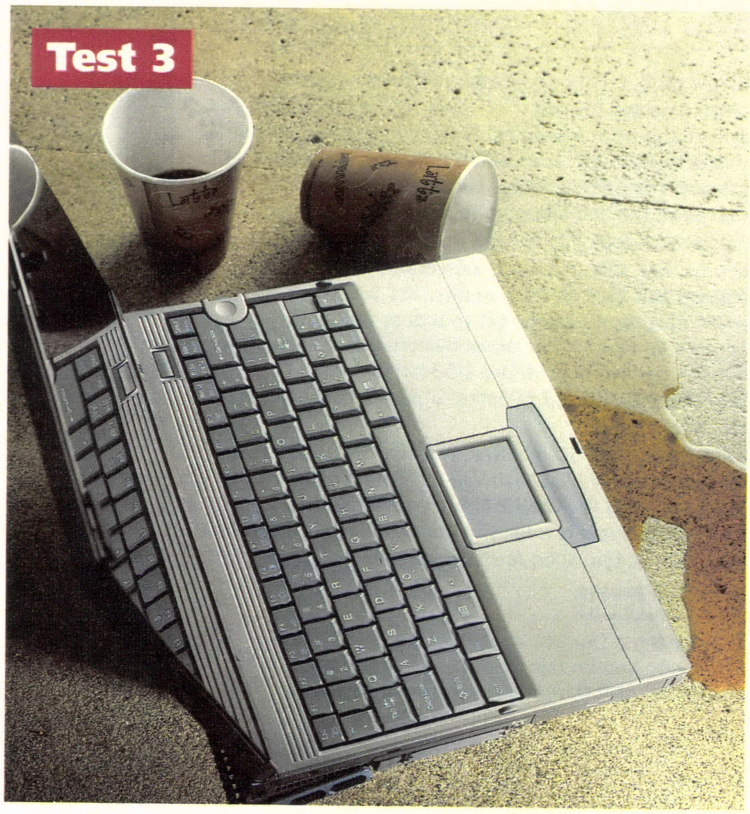
**Dell Inspiron 5000:** One cup of coffee. This sucker was smoking like a staffer at an RJR company picnic.

**Gateway Solo 9300 CX:** One cup of coffee. Sputtered and then went as black. R.I.P.

**Toshiba Satellite Pro 4280ZDVD:** Two cups of coffee. Surprised the hell out of us, too. They built this corporate computer to last.

### THE WINNER

**Sony VAIO PCG-XG19:** Since it's so stylish, two nonfat, decaf soy lattes and a Ketel One Cosmo. It actually has a separate layer between the rubber barrier and the keys. (Most laptops have just a perforated rubber layer that liquids can easily sneak behind.) We had to work to kill this guy. The moral: Keep the drinks away from your notebook. Electricity and liquids don't mix. Need proof? Sit in a full bathtub and throw in a plugged-in toaster. (Disclaimer: You will die if you do this, so please go ahead and help thin the herd.)




## Tonka Tough — The Drop Test

Everyone has those clumsy moments when you see yourself yelling, "Noooooooo!" in slow motion. This was, without a doubt, the most painful test to perform, yet somehow also the most rewarding.

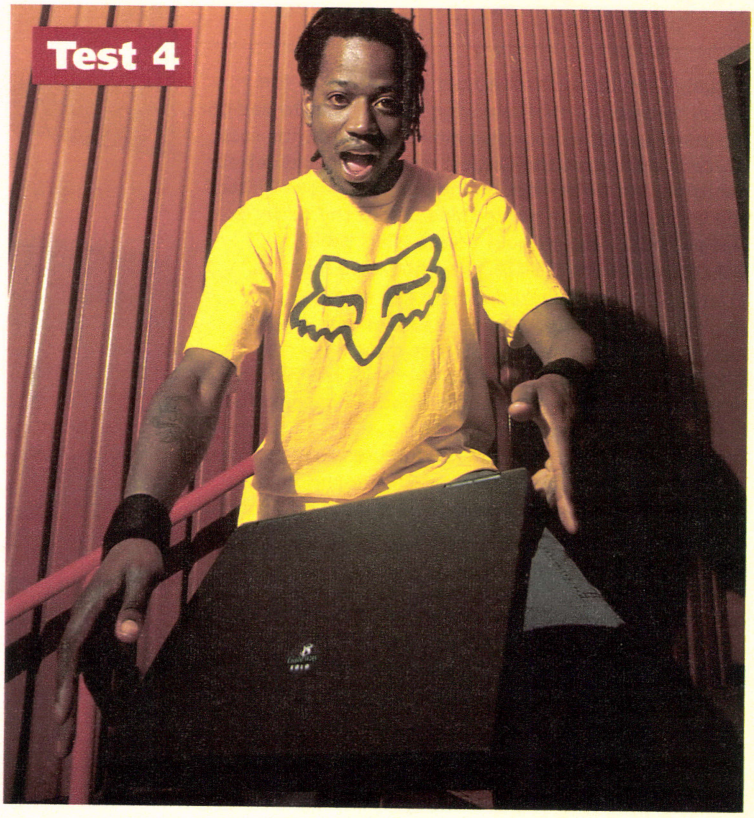
**Sony VAIO PCG-XG19:** Casualty. What do you expect from a stylish notebook? The brushed magnesium display cover is solid, but the plastic heat vent flap is very easy to dent.

**Dell Inspiron 5000:** Partial casualty. The plastic paneling around the display is very easy to damage. Granted, the display is always the weak link, but it's a little more pronounced on this one.

**Gateway Solo 9300 CX:** Partial casualty. The metal cover protecting the display makes this one of the sturdier units around. Considering how much it weighs, it probably did more damage to the steps.

### THE WINNER

**Toshiba Satellite Pro 4280ZDVD:** Survivor. This is one tough mutha, considering it's all plastic. We even tried to pull on the display to see if we could damage it. No luck as of yet. We're still waiting for the day notebooks are small and sturdy enough to take some serious punishment, but then again, we have some serious anger-management issues to resolve.






## Heavy, Man — The Junkie Chase Test

Notebooks are a hot commodity on the black market, but damn, these suckers are heavy! That's why we baited a street corner with each computer to see how far a junkie could get with one before we caught him.
**Gateway Solo 9300 CX:** A half-block. This 7.77-pound anchor slowed our gangly junkie down long enough for him to get a serious beat-down. Read these Nikes, fool!
**Dell Inspiron 5000:** One block. Like Oprah's fifth sortie to the buffet table, Dell's 7.43-pound brick is bound to slow you down eventually.
**Toshiba Satellite Pro 4280ZDVD:** Two blocks. 7.2 pounds is light enough to let him break a few tackles before we take him down like a new fish in Riker's Island.

**THE WINNER**

**Sony VAIO PCG-XG19:** We gave up after three blocks. Coming in at 6 pounds, this notebook is lighter because of the slightly smaller 14.1-inch display. Umm, sorry, Sony. We guess that makes you the winner. Let's put this in perspective for a moment. Average weight of a PC, with monitor, keyboard, mouse, and speakers: about 50 pounds. Portability factor: zero. So, 6–10 pounds isn't that bad, but it definitely adds up over time if you travel a lot with your laptop — or if you live in a bad neighborhood.

# THE WINNER Toshiba Satellite Pro 4280ZDVD



**ROAD WARRIOR** Built to last, the Toshiba lets you play your favorite games everywhere. Next month, the bullet test.

**Everybody's a winner in this roundup... kind of.**

**Dell** provides great performance with zero lockups, and the price is pretty reasonable. However, one USB port and the relatively dim display prevents the Inspiron 5000 from taking the top spot. **Gateway**'s Solo 9300 CX has a brighter, crisp display and two USB ports, so it is better suited for gaming, but the weak 3D chip (the same as Dell's) and touchpad keep it out of the running. **Sony,** on the other hand, wins major points for style, a unique shuttle jog dial for quick launches, and a privacy display to prevent Peeping Toms from looking over your shoulder... but damn, $4,000 is one hefty chunk of change! That, coupled with the piss-poor graphics card, makes us weep for this otherwise awesome machine.

Here's what surprised us: The **Toshiba Satellite Pro 4280ZDVD,** the most corporate of notebooks, equipped with S3's Savage IX graphics chip and built to survive three rounds with Lennox Lewis, is great for playing games. True, it may not have the largest hard drive or the fastest CPU, but for the moment this is probably the best way to fool around on the company dime.

# Gearheads

WE ANSWER YOUR TECH QUESTIONS | GEARHEADS@IPCG.COM

BY DI LUO AND DARREN GLADSTONE

## The Big Question of the Month

# Dazed and Confused

**Q. About eight months ago I played a computer game all night long on an old monitor. When I finished, I noticed that something was wrong: I couldn't concentrate, and it hasn't gone away. I spend every day walking around feeling like I'm in some kind of trance. This even happened to my sister about three years ago when she was taking a computer class, but it went away after about 24 hours.**

**A.** You're in luck. We happen to have a buddy in the eye-care biz, Dr. Jonathan Wasserstein, O.D.; we consulted him on the matter, and here's what he had to say.

"It appears that your sister has a case of functional vision disorder. In layman's terms, you look at a fixed object for a prolonged period of time, and your eye begins to strain. The eye problems can lead to blurry vision, double vision, eyestrain, and even fatigue like you've been describing. For your sister, it is a matter of her eyes needing to relax and unfocus. It isn't a severe problem, but it can be a chronic recurring problem in certain situations – like when you use a computer – but she just needs to learn how to better control her eye muscles. You, on the other hand, may have a structural problem, which can be more serious, considering you say that it has been going on for almost a year now."

To illustrate the difference between a functional and structural disorder, the good doctor put it this way: "When you can't tie your shoelaces because you don't know how, that's a functional problem. It's something that you can be taught to correct. But if you've broken your fingers and can't tie your shoelaces, you need to consult someone to repair that problem first."

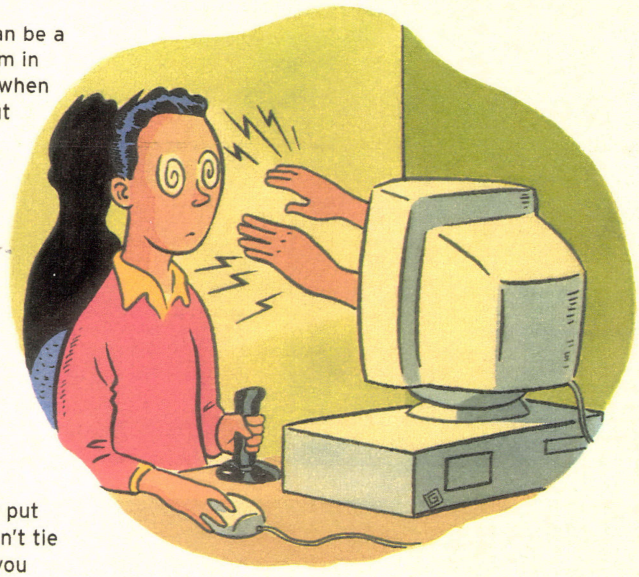


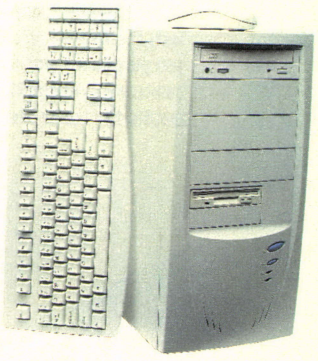
ILLUSTRATION BY A.J. GARCES

You should see an eye specialist as soon as possible and relate your problems to him or her. And if you can't tie your shoelaces because you don't know how, you've got even bigger problems.

# Slowpoke PC

**Q. I've got a PC with a 366MHz processor, and I just upgraded to 160MB of RAM (from 32) and an ATI Rage Pro Turbo video card. But my games *(Unreal Tournament, Thief II,* etc.) are still running slowly. I'm annoyed because I just dropped all that money to play games. What am I doing wrong here? Did I upgrade the wrong parts?**

**A.** Hitting some speed bumps, eh? Well, RAM can only take you so far. It does help a lot, but most games these days require a fast 3D video card as well – especially on slower machines. And if you were trying to run games at high resolutions, that only compounds the problem further. If you're looking for an affordable solution for the moment, we recommend the Diamond Viper 770 – a TNT 2 3D card with 32MB of RAM that costs about $129. It's a much better value than the Voodoo3 3000, which goes for around $149 but has only 16MB RAM and can't even support 32-bit color.



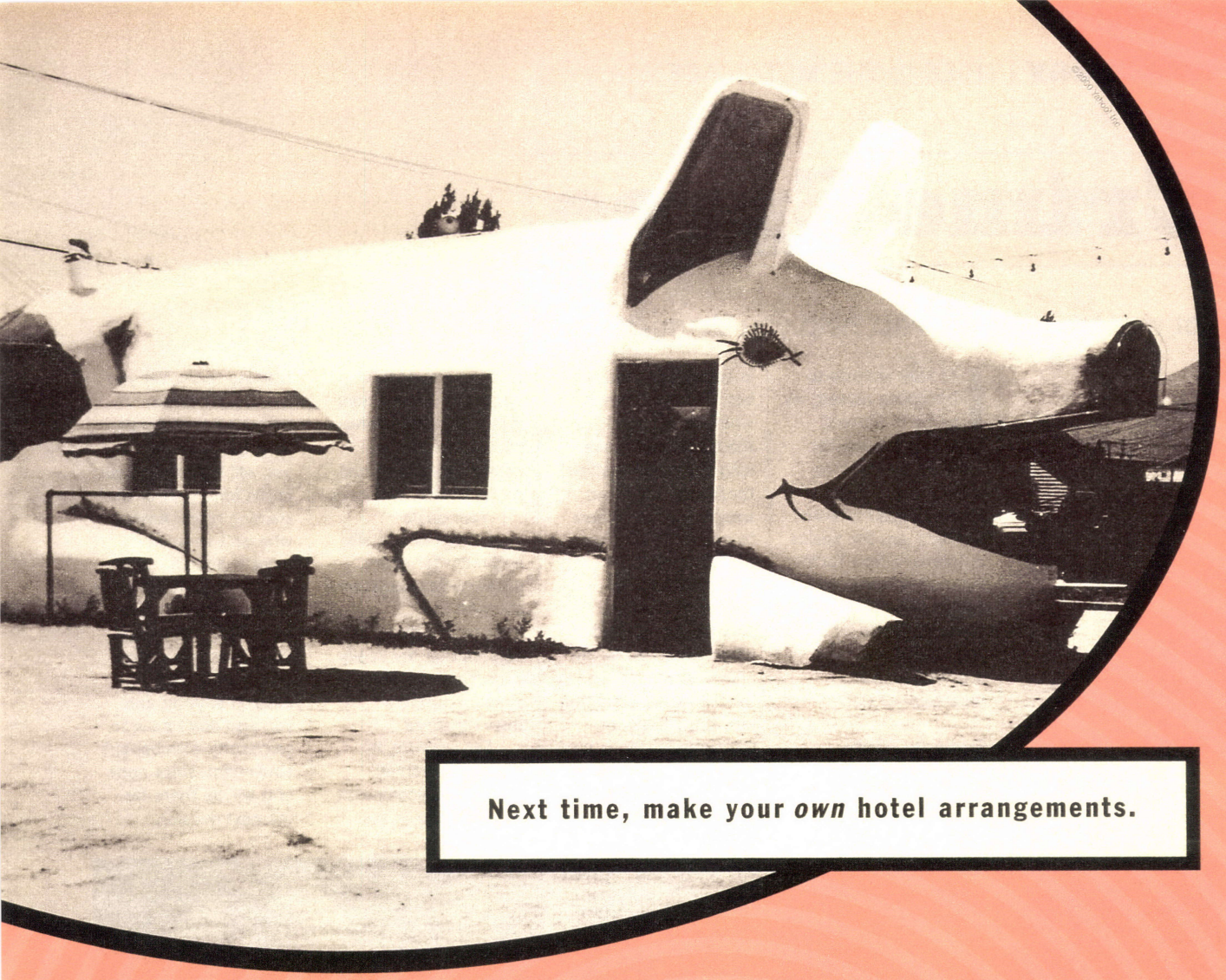
Also, try running your games at lower resolutions (640x480 or 800x600). They may not look as pretty, but they'll work. You should also close all unneeded applications while you're playing the games, as they can slow things down.

# Hardware Nostradamus

**Q. I am in a bit of a predicament. I don't know whether to buy the 3D Prophet or the Voodoo 5500 AGP. The Voodoo 5500 AGP is supposedly faster, but it doesn't support T&L [transform & lighting]. The 3D Prophet is less powerful but has T&L.**

**A.** Frankly, this isn't a question anyone can answer yet. 3dfx has shown us technology demos of what the 5500 can do, but we have yet to see finished products.

If you need a good card now, try Guillemot's 3D Prophet; we've yet to run into any problems with it yet. The Prophet is quite good, but depending on the prices in a month or two when the 5500 is finally on shelves, no one knows which will be the better value.



**Next time, make your *own* hotel arrangements.**

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Do You YAHOO!?

# Crime Spree

## Let master thief Garrett help you through the missions in *Thief II*

If I may venture to introduce myself, my name is Garrett, known as the Master Thief by trade. More than one year has passed since I offered to teach you the basics of thievery. Now further hidden treasures and golden trinkets are awaiting us. So let's start right away and brush up on our repertoire of skills.

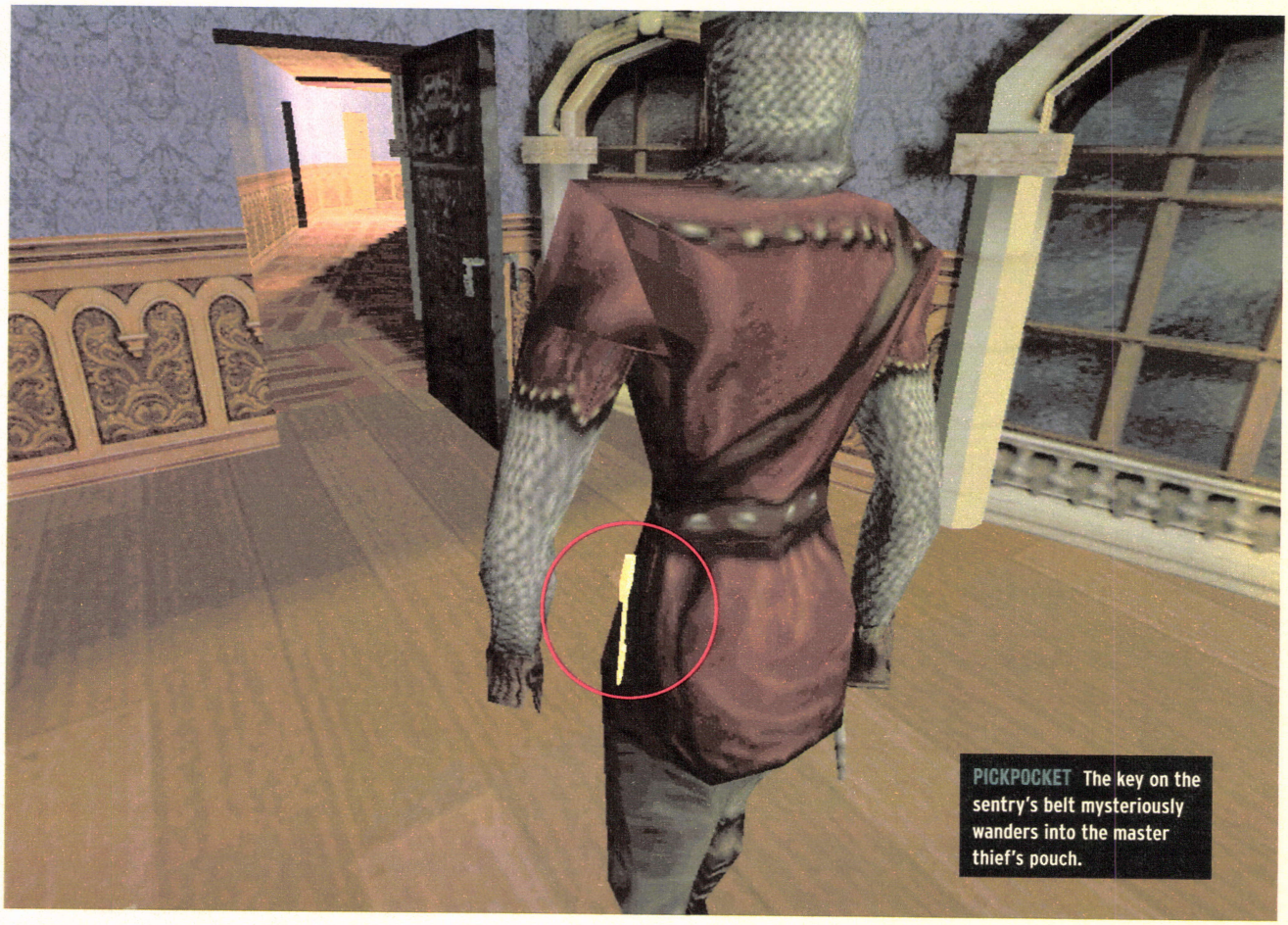
### General Hints

Anyone joining us on our nocturnal thieving spree for the first time is advised to read the box "Novice Thieves," whereas old hands of the trade won't take long to realize that all these new tools and weapons enable them to proceed even more professionally.

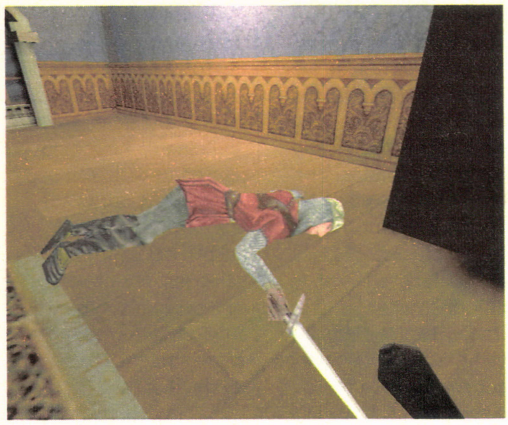
The standard setting can cause frustration, at least when you mistake the high-speed memory key for the load-instruction key, since they are positioned directly next to each other. Change that, by all means. As you have to act quickly to open a suddenly appearing locked door fast, it is recommended that you configure comfortable hot keys for lock picks and keys.

Your basic equipment is actually sufficient for every mission. You can start out with the assumption that objects that are really necessary can also be pinched during a thieving spree.

For example, in Mission 3: Framed, there is a balcony with a secret door in the training room. Yet you cannot get there without a rope arrow. Take a look around and you will find some cash in the back part of the training room. Anyone who isn't keen on lengthy search operations can certainly spend earned ducats left, right, and center. You cannot hoard your gold for the next mission anyway, and you also don't have to be miserly with bought equipment, since none of it will be there for the next mission.



**PICKPOCKET** The key on the sentry's belt mysteriously wanders into the master thief's pouch.



**DOWN FOR THE COUNT** Killing a guard isn't the only way to take them out. The blackjack also works nicely.

The information content of tips for sale in the shop is not always worth the money you end up paying for them. Take the easy way and buy the note, read it, and try to memorize its content before loading the previous score. This way you can save some loot.

How you want to approach the game is completely up to you. If you really want to find all of the hidden secrets and each and every single piece of gold, you will not only invest much more time, but will also expose yourself to even more dangers. But whatever decision you make, remember that as soon as all your aims are fulfilled, the mission is automatically over, and you can't go on looking for hidden treasures.

The statistics screen provides you with details on the total number of locks and the overall volume of hidden gold. Unfortunately, it is impossible to view it during an ongoing mission. Kill yourself at the beginning of every thieving spree and take time to jot down all of the essential data from the statistics shown shortly afterward. Repeat the mission, and then you can take a look at your notes at any time in the future to figure out what is still missing.

Depending on the lights and the ground, you can creep up quite close to a person. You may even let patrolling guards pass by very closely if you can manage to hide in the shadows (in a doorframe, for example) and remain motionless.

It is also a good idea to conceal your weapons from view and draw them only right before you're ready to use them. This is another way you can keep the guards from instantly realizing that you represent a threat to them.

Anyone who takes the time to watch closely the many guards or citizens often discovers purses or keys hanging from their belts. It is an art to steal them without knocking down the owner. Pay attention to the archers' quivers, as you might get the chance to pilfer some arrows once in a while. It is worth keeping in mind that your arm is

## A Guide for Novice Thieves

**Bear in mind that there is no way to become a successful thief other than to follow some essential basic principles of our highly respectable trade. Should this be your first time getting down to work, the normal difficulty level will be just perfect for you.**

**Rule 1:** The shadow is our friend, and the light is our enemy. Always keep an eye on your visibility gem – the darker it is, the better for you. No guard can see you in the pitch-dark night. Watch out for light sources that you might want to extinguish with your water arrows.

**Rule 2:** Sneak around carefully and listen to your steps. Apart from light, noise can also become quite a nuisance. If cantankerous thugs approach you, you need to act as quietly as possible. Take small, slow footsteps on poorly soundproofed ground (tiles, stone). However, should it be your intention to distract somebody, you can also make use of loud thudding.

**Rule 3:** Use your tools in a careful and thoughtful way. Perfect physical control and professional use of your equipment helps to turn thievery into a profitable business for you. The best way to handle the blackjack, water arrows, and other tools is described in the boxout on the next page.

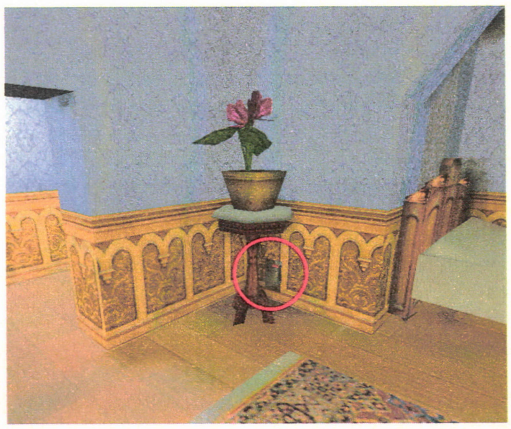
**Rule 4:** Even if you are in haste, never be in a hurry. Being a master thief primarily means being a creative one. Don't try to get to the same spot of a room again and again if that continues to fail. You'd do better to watch out for other possibilities. For example, look for hidden corners and manholes leading you to the spot by a rather roundabout but safe way.

**Rule 5:** You are anything but illiterate, so kindly take notes. You also have a good map and compass at hand. These things put you in a position to find your way around at any time. Mark the places that are safe for a possible retreat, in case you are followed. Don't forget to write down as well where secret walks open up.

**Rule 6:** You must know what your opponents do, so pay attention. It is clear that stolen property is always guarded well. Yet a thief is always more clever than a sentry, so memorize the patrols of the guards, make use of the timing to sneak by without being noticed, and take the keys and gold from those fools while they pass by. Don't worry, you may approach these guys quite closely – you just have to stay concealed.

**Rule 7:** Leave no traces – get rid of duped guards. If you have already used the blackjack or fatal arrow successfully, try to hide any lifeless bodies in dark corners so other sentries don't become aware of your intrusion. Don't forget to search them.

**Rule 8:** You've got healthy legs – so run rather than fight when you're spotted. Your aim is definitely not to slay all your opponents. The guards fight really well and are always ready to give you a good spanking. Escaping into the darkness is therefore the better choice in most cases. Wait until the situation has calmed down. (Listen to the guards' comments.) Nevertheless, if you cannot avoid passing a sentry, try to shoot a well-aimed arrow into his neck or head in order to make the nasty bastard collapse immediately. Good luck. Soon you will be a master thief, just like me.



**A GOOD EYE** Our thief would have almost sneaked past this place if his instinct hadn't told him to check the table.

quite long and you can also lean forward. You can also take advantage of your long arm in order to open doors from a distance. This way you don't run the risk of being spotted too early.

Take short strides so you don't make noise as you move around. This works even on wooden or stone floors. If your opponent has actually heard something (listen to their comments), stay silent for a while.

Patrolling guards are much more difficult to avoid once they're alerted to your presence. Choose a dark corner along the path where you can try to attack the opponent from the shadows. When the guard passes you, simply lean forward and take him out with the blackjack; otherwise you have to sneak right behind the guard. Should the ground turn out to be too noisy, shoot a moss arrow onto the ground. See an opponent below within jumping distance? Just crouch and jump down – these kinds of jumps don't cause any noise.

If you want to find every secret, you need to use your imagination. Cut every tapestry with your sword, search dark corners intensively, and peek under tables and other furnishings. The rope arrow is often the key to ferret out secret hiding places. It is particularly difficult to detect smaller treasures like rings and coins. You often have to get really close to pieces of furniture in order to seize such trinkets.

Don't forget that your eye features a zoom ability. Use it to spy on faraway mercenaries.

### Mission 2

In order to avoid any disturbance that could spoil this mission, you'd better sneak all around building A. Knock out all the guards and pile them up in dark corners. Be careful when you approach the sentries and observe the ground so you will know which wooden planks might creak suspiciously.

Force your way into the stairwell of building A. Case the joint on the first floor again. There are enough dark corners here to let you knock out all of the guards with your blackjack.

## Here are some tools to help you on your thieving way

**In the pursuit of your shady profession, you will certainly need an extensive arsenal of useful tools and weapons. Using such thieving aids isn't always easy, so take your time and learn how to handle them.**

### Old Tools

#### Blackjack

Remember that as a thief, you want to reach your goal without being noticed, which makes the handy blackjack one of our most important tools. Having chosen a sentry to put out of action, knock him out from behind. Be careful, because if he catches sight of you he can't be knocked out with the blackjack anymore.

#### Moss Arrow

Save the moss arrows for really noisy surfaces. If you have to walk across metal or marble-tiled floors, use this arrow to create a moss carpet that will muffle your steps.

#### Water Arrow

The various vaults and rooms of our workplaces do not always offer enough shadows to hide in. Look out for torches or gas lamps shimmering in a bluish light. You may soak them with water arrows in order to create new hiding places. Nevertheless, you have to be on the alert, since some guards are actually able to relight torches that have already been put out. These arrows should be on top of your shopping list so you can cope with all the security robots.

#### Rope Arrow

Never forget to look up frequently and attentively. Wooden support beams, overhanging roofs, and similar architectural components are often the keys to hidden entrances or treasures. The rope can even save your life if you are on the run, providing there are no archers among the mercenaries following you. Quietly hang on the rope and let your pursuers search in vain for you in the dark.

#### Noisemaking Arrow

It helps draw the guards' attention into another direction. However, you usually find enough objects (bottles, boxes, plates, and the like) with which you can startle mercenaries. Have a try – even a broadhead arrow shot against walls of stone or metal can cause the desired commotion.

#### Fire Arrow

Save these arrows for the undead. One or two hits should finally release those restless souls.

#### Gas Arrow

A sentry is at a place that's brightly lit up, and you can't manage to get close to him? No problem: Just use a gas arrow. The cloud given off will send him to dreamland.

#### Broadhead Arrow

Should it be your wish to silence you opponent for good, use a broadhead arrow. Look for a favorable position and aim at the neck or head. Your first shot must also be your last. Otherwise the enemy will make too much noise or might even try to call for backup.

#### Flash Bomb

As you might know, it takes some practice to effectively handle flash bombs. Remember that you don't have much time to knock down a blinded opponent or escape from him.

#### Mine

Mines have enormous effect; no guard has a chance to survive them. However, be aware of the fact that such a loud explosion can alert other thugs to your presence.

### New Tools

#### Spectator Orb

It goes without saying that you should make use of your mechanical orb. It is always good to know what's going on around a corner or down some stairs. Remember where you use the orb (mark it on the map) in case you want to collect it later.

#### Speed Potion

This elixir is useful for leaving pursuers behind or passing a patrolled section at breakneck speed.

#### Invisibility Potion

Use this potion to get by many guards who would be too difficult to distract or subdue. Be sure to hurry, since the potion loses its effect after a short while.

#### Slowfall Potion

If you need to jump from a high point in order to escape an ill-tempered mercenary, this potion enables you to land without being injured.

#### Flare

The flare burns out pretty quickly. The easiest way to orient yourself in a pitch-dark room is to set the gamma setting to a high level.

#### Frog Egg

After getting acquainted with those small beasts as your enemies, you can now make them your allies. If you toss them, the little bipeds will attack approaching targets. Two of those little critters are enough to send an opponent to the happy hunting grounds. Since you can throw the eggs, even guards who are hard to approach can be taken out from a safe distance.

#### Vine Arrows

This arrow has the same advantages as the rope arrow you already know. However, this variant can also be used for metal grids and thus gives access to further gates.

You will find the missing sticker in the bookkeeper's office (identification number 7732).

You can open the different hall gates, even in the little huts around the store buildings, and you don't have to return to the central control station on the first floor again and again. The key for the huts can be stolen from one of the guards.

Search all the halls of storehouse A thoroughly to fill your pouches with as much gold as possible to achieve the aim of the mission. Of course, there are valuables located in the other buildings also.

Put the sticker on the freight box in hall 7933.

**Hint for masters of the trade:** Climb onto the gigantic stacks of crates that are put up all around the store halls. From there you can spot several open containers concealing quite a few trinkets. Go up every stack of crates in the halls, too, and you will probably see some locked chests that also contain quite a nice amount of coins.

There is a safe on the roof of the music hall (5188). Use the horn from the music studio and your lock picks to open it.

Cross the metal footbridges leading to building A. There you can smash one dorm window each and jump down. Some locked boxes are also to be found in the chambers below. Take a closer look at the bookshelf in the president's office on the third floor of building B. One of the books serves as the switch for a secret room. Some coins are lying on the table in the opposite conference room.

Head for the docks and use the blackjack to give the guards a sound thrashing. With a bit of luck, the guard on the ship can be lured into the water, where he will drown. Open the freight box on the deck to discover a secret next to the nasty spiders. Move the telescope and turn the steering wheel to find another secret.

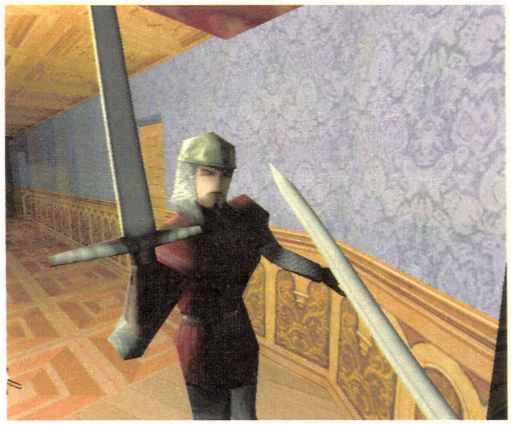
### Mission 3

Head straight for the reception. Pay attention to the gas lamps in the corridor. At the console in the middle of the room, you have the chance to deactivate the alarm system completely.

Go to the training room. There is a lever next to a rope arrow in the rear that opens a secret walk on the balcony of the training room. The walk leads to the sheriff's office. Picking the lock will grant you quick access to Hagen's office. Take the cloth that is laying in the drawer and put it in your pocket.

From Truart's office, sneak into Officer Mosely's office and snatch the key to the document and treasure vault.

Creep back to the training room and move onto the stairs that lead to the register hall. Knock out all of the guards.

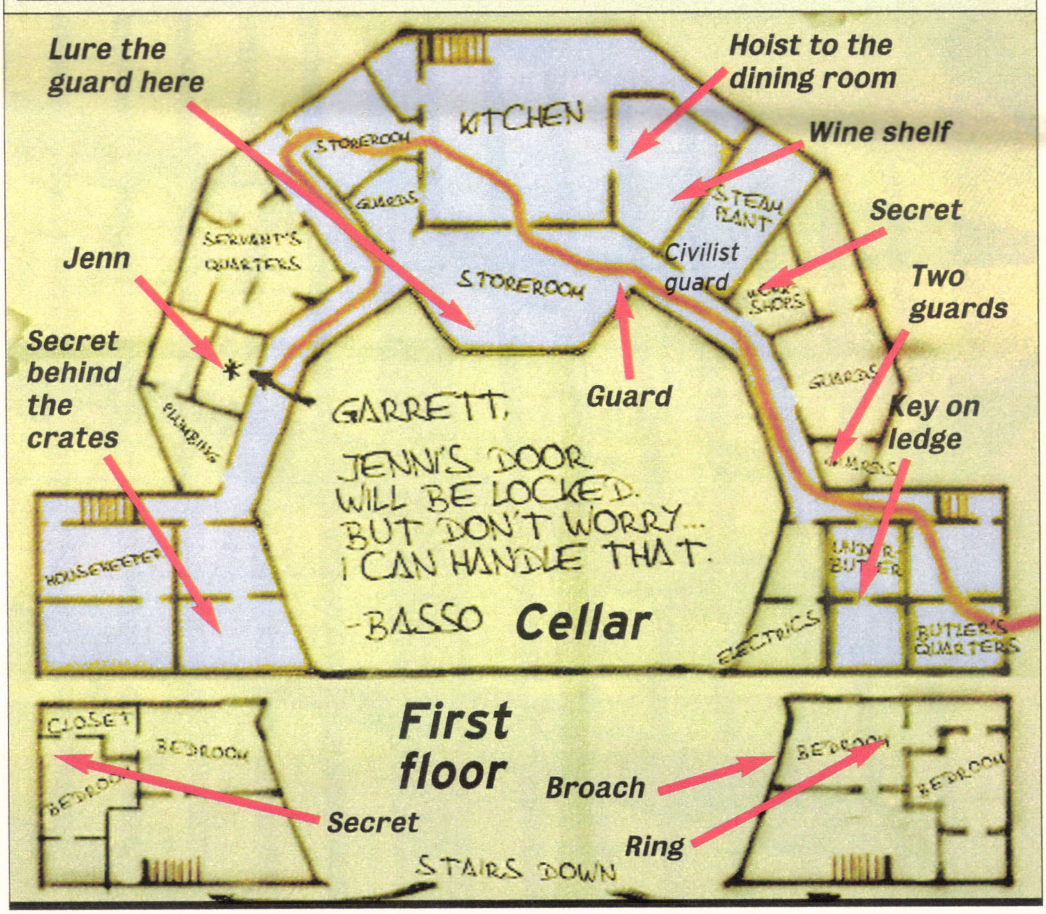


**RUN AWAY! RUN AWAY!** Hand-to-hand combat should be your last option. These guys are better fighters than you.

Look at the book on the table to get the deactivation code (4026). Then use the secret walk in the very back chamber to return to the central office. Quietly cross through the accommodations on

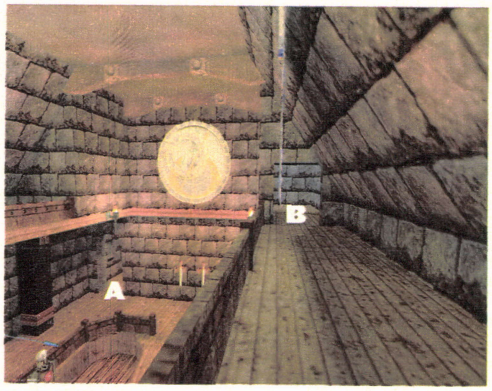
## Mission 1: Running Interference

**Difficulty: Easy Pickpocketing: 10 Loot: 1,295 Secrets: 3**



your way back to the training room.

Let's deal with the interiors now. Be careful: You've got just a short time frame to sneak past the sentry without being noticed.




**MASTERLY** The lever (A) opens the secret walkway (B) to the sheriff's office. Use a rope arrow to get up there.

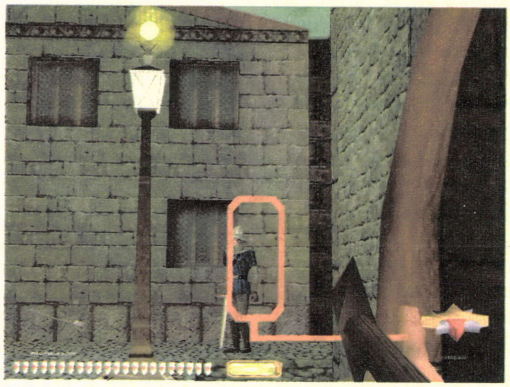
If you have an invisibility potion on hand, use it now.

A suspicious-looking tapestry with a bookshelf next to it turns out to be a secret walk, which on closer inspection leads to the evidence.

Escape the security system by simply extinguishing the gas lamps with a water arrow and sneak off under cover of darkness. You must steal a key from the guards patrolling around the foyer.

Deactivate the security system and make your way into the treasure vault. Before leaving the room with the cash box, put down Hagen's cloth there. You've got to get back to Hagen's office once more to deposit the cash box there.

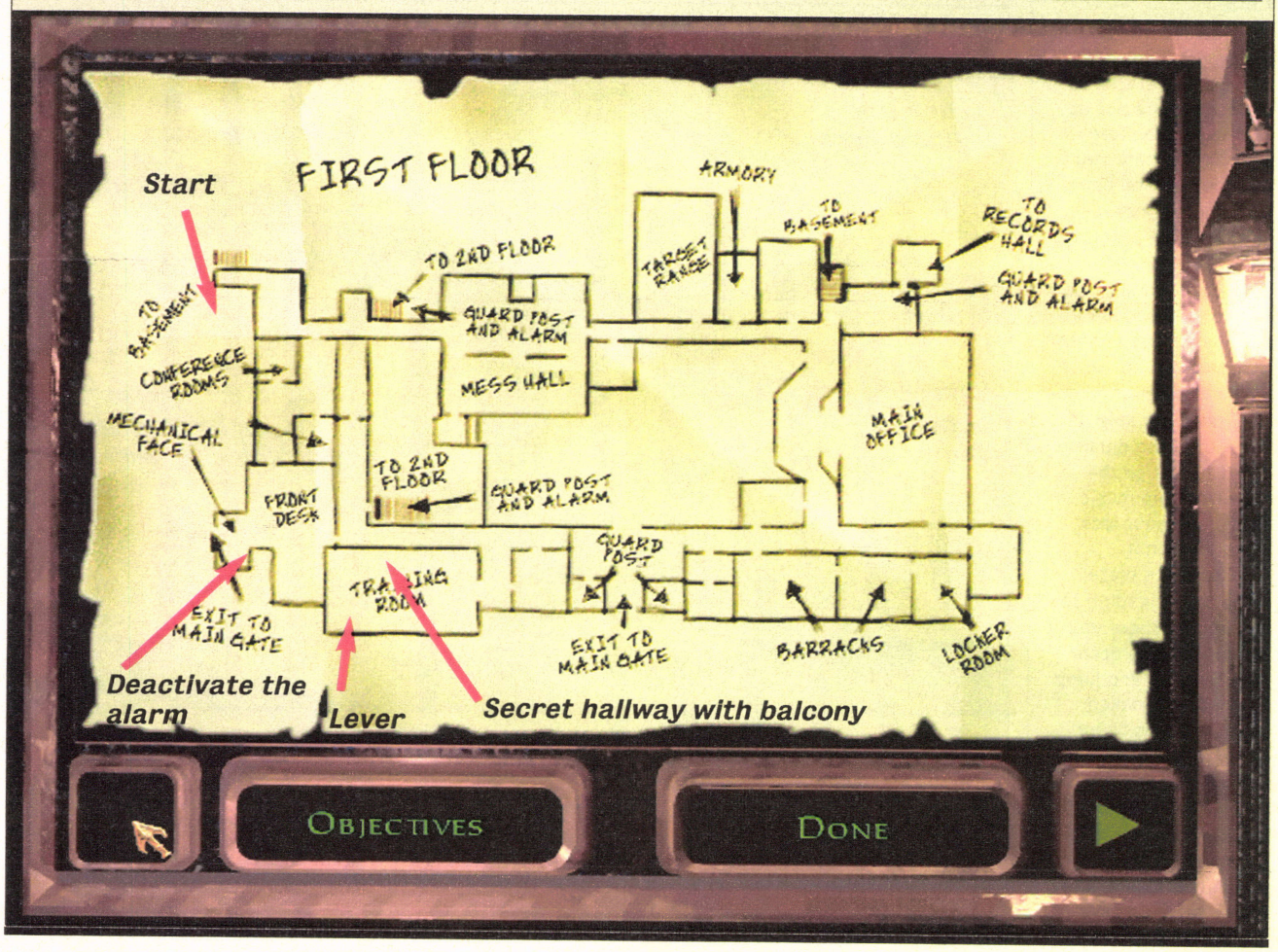
**Hints for masters of the trade:** Take the time to search the cellar thoroughly. The water puddles hide water arrows and other loot. The poor fool in the mortuary won't need his purse anymore, so don't



**ONE SHOT, ONE KILL** Aim carefully, because if you miss and he lives, you're going to be chopped liver in an instant.

## Mission 3: Framed

**Difficulty: Hard Pickpocketing: 5 Loot: 1,378 Secrets: 10**



hesitate to take it!

Stop in the conference rooms to learn something about your crime in the first mission (the witness).

Other rooms that are worth examining are the central office, the dining hall, and the barracks, as well as all the offices on the second floor. You'll be much richer before you head for home.

These tips should bring you much success in your newly chosen trade. Remember, there's no one good way to becoming a great thief, but one thing's for sure: it pays to never be seen. Good luck!

## The Metal Age

**The Mechanists have a few more devices to watch for:**

### Security Cameras

Those devices you'll see that resemble human faces are connected to alarm systems that either trip any alarm throughout the current level or trigger local cannon turrets. Sometimes it is possible to extinguish light sources in such a guarded room so that you can sneak by without being seen. The cameras won't pick up any noise. You should furthermore pay attention to the movement of the cameras and slink along at the side the camera is temporarily not monitoring. If a camera detects your movement, pause for a short while. The security device will continue to move if you are motionless for a moment.

### Transformed Guards

The guards with metal masks behave like their human colleagues. Take them out with the blackjack.

### Security Robots

These creatures won't harm you at all, but they will alert their big brothers, the fighter robots. Shoot a water arrow at the back of the guards in order to stop their steam-driven engines.



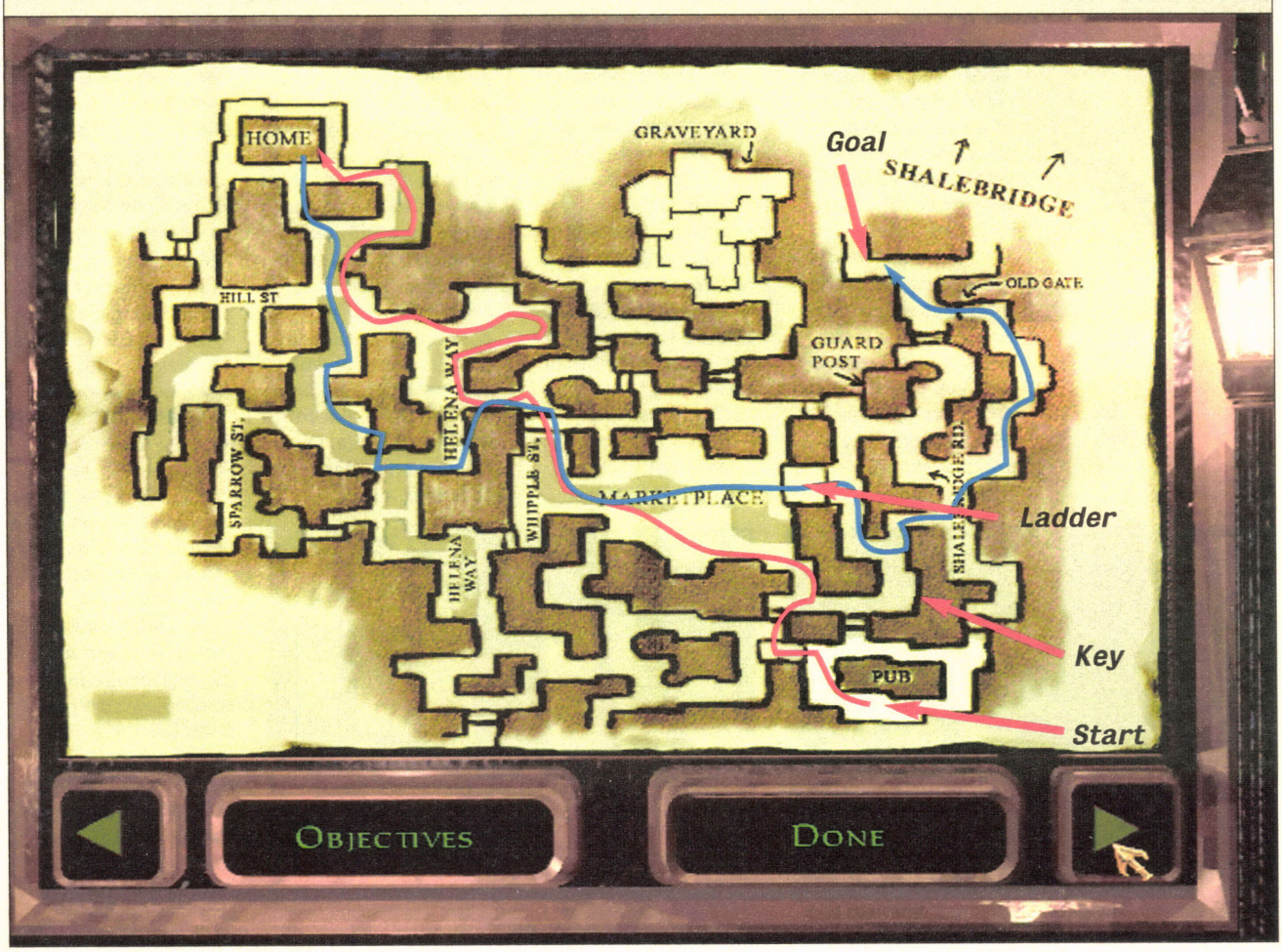
**BIG BROTHER** **Shoot water arrows at gas lamps. As soon as the lights go out, you can sneak under the camera.**

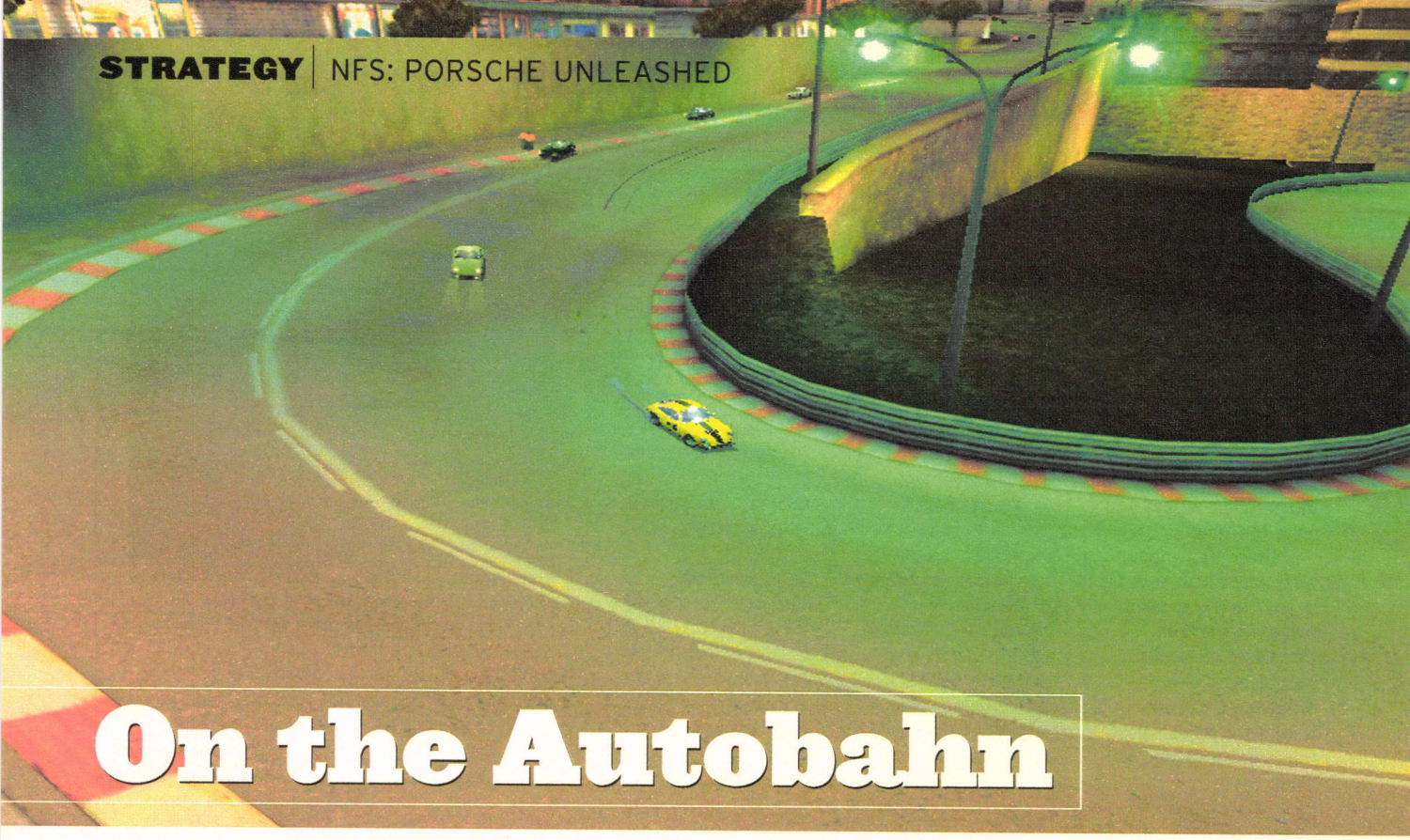
### Fighter Robots

The big colossi are very dangerous due to their far-reaching weapons. Nevertheless, they are not too hard to defeat. Two or three well-aimed water arrows will kill them.

## Mission 4: Ambush

**Difficulty: Hard** **Pickpocketing: 4** **Loot: 1,570** **Secrets: 0**





# On the Autobahn

## Buckle up tight for *incite*'s *NFS: Porsche Unleashed* driving lesson

**What car enthusiast doesn't dream of revving the engine of a Porsche, new or classic, and hearing it growl in anticipation of the open road?**

*Need for Speed: Porsche Unleashed* is a great game for getting a taste of what driving a real Porsche is like. Here are a few tips to help you play the game and carve up even the windiest turns like a professional race car driver on meth.

**I'm still a *Need for Speed* beginner. How should I approach this game?**

First, choose a medium-speed car from the '70s. The standard Porsche 911, for example, is an ideal car to start with. Go for fast races only.

Choose the Côte d'Azure track, since it has a nice mix of tight turns, long turns, and narrow passages.

Start by trying to drive under control, then put the pedal down and pick up the pace as you gain confidence.

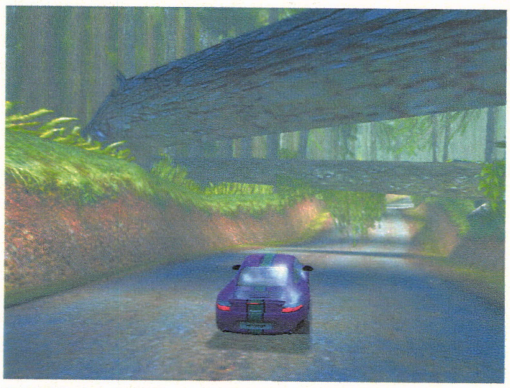
A good way to learn your car's limits and get a good feel for the game is to choose a single race with no competition, and turn on traffic. Then try to drive as legally as possible by staying in your lane except when you want to pass. Once you can drive like you would in real life, you'll have much better control in a race.

**Slicks or standard tires: Which one holds the road the best?**

Slicks are best suited for driving on dry pavement that's smooth and free of a lot of bumps. Buy and install slicks on you car when you're racing on the following tracks: Provence, Côte d'Azure, Corsica, the Industrial Area, and Monaco.

You can also go with slicks in the Black Forest, but you might find that standard tires give you the advantage here, because the road can be a little rough in certain places.

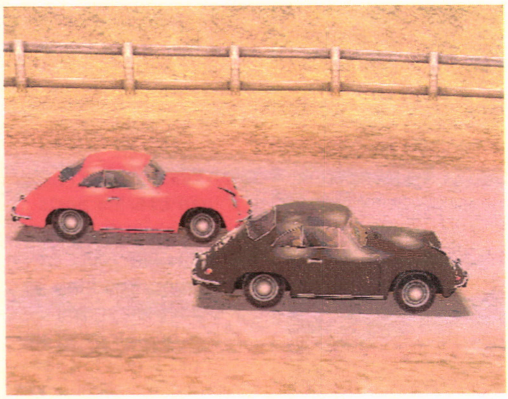
Definitely take off the slicks in the Alps, as you'll be driving over some snow-covered stretches there that can be pretty treacherous if you don't have treads. Also don't use slicks if there's a call for rain during a race, or else you might find that you're spending more time



**BIG LOG** The trip through the undergrowth of the Black Forest almost seems like a tour 'round Jurassic Park.



**CLEAR CUT THE CORNERS** Slide too hard into this curve and you'll be crushed like a bug. Logs aren't very forgiving.



**HEAD-TO-HEAD** Computer-controlled drivers will try to bump you off the track. Try to keep your distance.

wrecking your car instead of racing it.

**What's the purpose of the fiberglass bumper?**
It makes the car lighter and faster. The disadvantage: It breaks more easily than a standard bumper. You'll do better without it, as the speed advantage is outweighed by the effects of damage on the car's handling and performance.

Another advantage of the standard bumper is that you won't need to spend as much money on repairs following a race, so you'll have more cash for upgrades.

**Is there a trick that facilitates better visibility at Corsica?**
Yes! Just go to the display menu and set the gamma setting to a lower value. That way the glare from the sun won't be as bright, and you'll have an extended field of vision. By the way, you can do the same thing to improve visibility in all night races. Of course, you'll really have to tweak the gamma setting. It's also a good idea to switch off the lights on night rides at some courses (such as Monaco), because the street lighting provides enough light for a better view.

**Which view is the best for fast times?**
It depends on several factors. If you know the track inside and out, the cockpit view is ideal, as it offers you a completely realistic driving experience. If you are practicing on an unknown track, however, it can be useful to select an external perspective so you can see more of the track. It will also give you much more time to prepare for upcoming turns and obstacles.

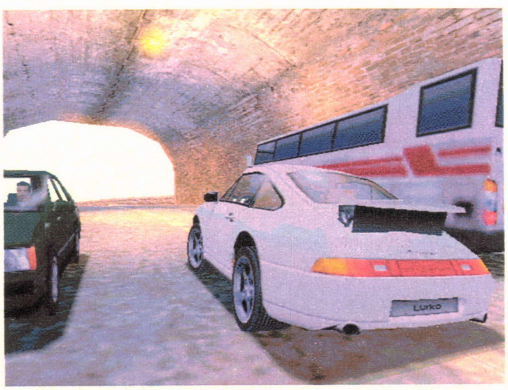
The best overall view is probably the default (first-person view), as you can see quite a bit of the track.

**Automatic or manual transmission: Which one should I choose? Is there an advantage in changing gears manually?**
PC sim drivers who use a manual transmission are generally faster on the track than drivers who use the automatic transmission. This also applies to *NFS: Porsche Unleashed,* but the difference between manual and automatic transmission isn't as great. The artificial intelligence in *NFS: Porsche Unleashed* does a good job of shifting at the proper times in automatic transmission mode, so if you feel more comfortable with automatic, go for it. Manual gear shifting might save you three or four seconds, but it can unnecessarily distract you as well. In any case, beginners should rely on automatic transmission.

However, should there be only a few seconds separating you from mastering a track section, you should try the manual transmission. This is particularly true of hilly sections, where dropping to a lower gear can sometimes make a difference



**THAR SHE BLOWS!** It can be fun to make an impromptu fountain out of a fire hydrant.



**SQUEEZE PLAY** Don't be afraid to squeeze between lanes of traffic. In a tight race it might give you an advantage.

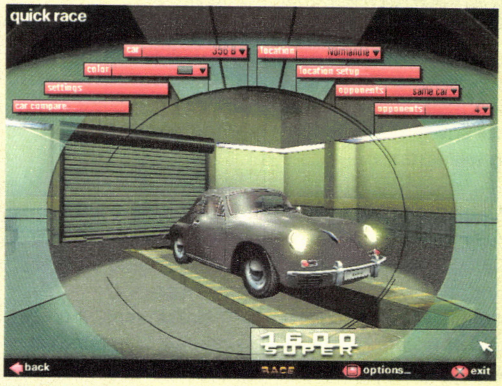


**BY THE LIGHT OF THE GAMMA** On night tracks it's useful to tweak the gamma so you can see better. Headlights sometimes just aren't enough if you plan to win.

## The Basics: Advice for the New Driver

**If *Porsche Unleashed* is your first *Need for Speed* game, here are some general tips to help you enjoy the game better.**

- In a high-speed race, try out several cars before you choose one to enter the fray.
- Stay in your lane, because the oncoming traffic will sometimes panic and crash into you.
- Study the map before each race to get a general idea of what to expect on the course. On normal tracks you can also go for a test drive before the race.
- If you can afford it, always repair your car completely. A damaged car is much harder to handle.
- In Evolution mode, be sure to invest in part upgrades in the classic era before you buy a second car.
- If you can afford it, try to hold off selling an older car until it's a few thousand dollars more than its original value, then trade up.
- After coming off a successful tournament, cars you don't need any longer should be sold to enhance your financial flexibility. You can easily buy these cars back later if you want to.




**NOT TOO FAST** When you're just learning to drive, use one of the older models – they're easier to control.

that will help you win the race.

**The oncoming traffic keeps crashing into me. What's wrong with them? Are they idiots?**

You're probably driving too close to the oncoming lane. This will cause panic-stricken reactions from the oncoming drivers. They change lanes wildly, sometimes right into you. The best thing to do is to stay in the right lane, particularly if you spot oncoming traffic. Another possibility is that their attention has been drawn to you by a cop in hot pursuit.

Sometimes Good Samaritan drivers will feel the need to help out the police by ramming into you. Get away from the police fast! As soon as you can't hear the sirens anymore, the oncoming traffic will no longer try to hit you.

The police in *NFS: Porsche Unleashed* are also much more aggressive than in any other *Need for Speed* game, so you'll have to really work hard to get away from them. Just grit your teeth and get on with it!

You must try to get out of the cops' sight as quickly as possible. Unless you're really pressed for time, it's sometimes a good idea to be prudent and slow down just before you reach the cop car's radar, and to stay under the speed limit until you're out of sight. Then step on it and get the hell out of there!

**Repairs cost a fortune, and I sometimes don't have the spare cash. When can I do without a repair?**

If load-bearing parts such as wings, tires, and the like are damaged, you have to repair them or you'll never be able to drive competitively in the next race.

If the body or windshield is damaged, you could go without repairing it if you're running short on cash.

**The car always slides out of control when I apply the brakes. What's wrong?**

Slamming on the brakes is mercilessly punished in *Porsche Unleashed,* especially when you're driving one of the older models. Since these cars don't have an antilock braking system, the rear end of the car will often slide out, causing you to lose control. Yet even if your car is equipped with antilock brakes, you should apply them gently to avoid any unnecessary skidding.

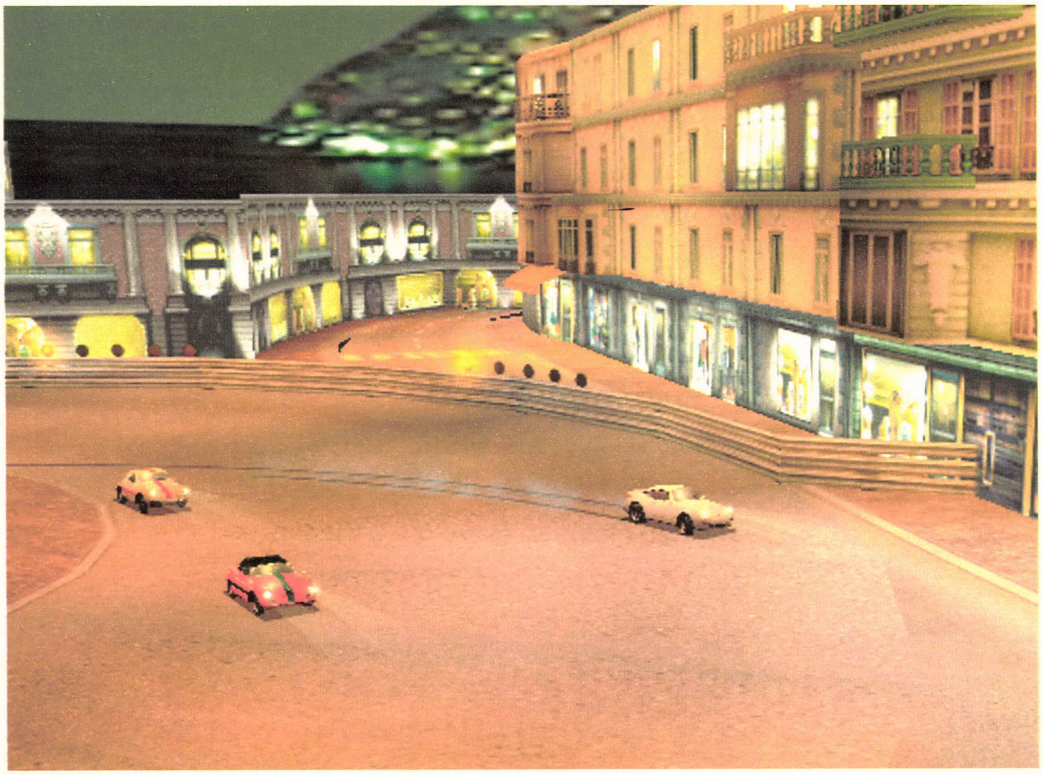
It can also help to set the brake bias toward the rear. This causes more pressure to be applied to the rear brakes instead of




**HEAD-ON** Stay on your side of the street – oncoming vehicles will panic if you drive on their side of the road.



**BURN IT UP** On the Pyrenees track you may enter the bend toward town at about 120mph.



**GO WITH SLICKS, SLICK** Either take this turn a little slower or change your tires. This track in Monoco is one where you'll always want to put slicks on your car before every race since it's always dry and smooth.

the front, which will take away braking power, but it will help keep the rear end of the car from sliding out when you hit the brakes too hard.

**Do I really have to prevent scratching the car in the Test Drive mode, or does the Porsche test leader allow some leeway?**
Well, what would you do if you've been waiting for your new car to be delivered and it arrives all scratched up? You'd be pissed! It's almost the same in *Porsche Unleashed.*

If you crash the car in a mission that requires you to deliver a car, you will fail. Sometimes it is possible to slightly scratch the car and get away with it, but anything more violent than that and you've had it. You can tell if you've damaged the car too much because the timer will turn red.

**Is it ever okay to hit a pylon in a Test Drive mode test?**
That depends. In the case of a slalom-course test, you can't touch them or you'll suffer a time penalty. On a rally drive, however, you have to hit every single one to continue to the next one. You'll know when you've hit one because a signal will sound to tell you so, and the guide arrow will change directions.

## The Tracks

Here are the general characteristics of each track and some tips to help you to drive more competitively on them.

**Hulda is making her bed — Racing in the Alps**
A few miles into the Alps course it starts to snow heavily, so make sure you install rain tires before you start out. Soon after the start you'll encounter two vicious switchbacks. Drive carefully, otherwise you'll have a tough time catching back up to the front of the pack.

Also, you can take the alternate route near the end of the run if you like, but it won't give you all that much of an advantage.



**THROUGH THE WOODS** Taking this shortcut at the very beginning of the race will save you a little time on the Normandy track.




**IT'S IN THE HOLE** **In Corsica you can take a shortcut by driving through the tunnel. Caution: It is pitch black in the tunnel. Headlights won't be of any use at all, but adjusting the gamma setting might help.**

### Summer, sun, and fatal curves — Corsica

The sun shines brightly in Corsica, so slicks are a good idea. (So are sunglasses, to help you deal with the glare.) The track is quite windy, and you should know it well before you race it. Turn right at the first junction if you can handle the dark tunnel.

### Almost like Jurassic Park — the Black Forest

This stage goes down into the Black Forest. At the beginning, you'll be driving through farms. It is essential to stay on the road here, since the pale brown fields really slow down your ride. Having snaked through the undergrowth, you can cut corners, literally, by going a bit off road.

### Bye-bye speed limit — the Motorway

The Motorway equals full speed without compromise. Once you take a ride in the 911 GT1 on this course, you'll know what speed really means.

Despite the rain, you should use slicks. Be careful at the narrow passage through the tollgate and at the bisectional tunnel right behind it.

### Short tour around the city full of hitches — Auvergne

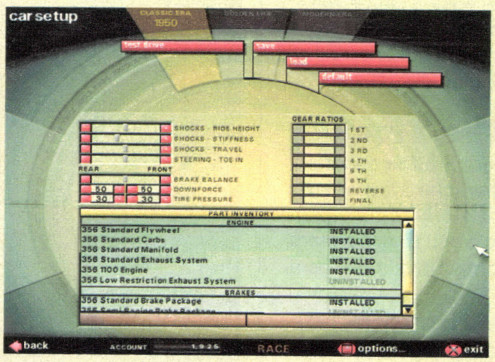
A picturesque medieval center awaits you on this track if you take a wrong turn! Use the detour around the center. It's fun to flatten the hydrants and look in the rearview mirror to see the water jets shooting out off the ground.

## Spare Parts for Everybody

**Spare parts are the key to victory in every race. Should you drive with a new acquisition featuring no tuning parts at all, you're almost certain to lose.** Always buy spare parts that increase your car's performance. The sports brakes, for example, facilitate more precise braking and counteract your car's sliding out of control, whereas goodies such as the high-performance filter and the special exhaust definitely soup up your car. There are also various possibilities for tuning the car specifically for the different tracks.

If you drive on a narrow, winding track such as the Auvergne, you can reduce the skidding of the car in curves by means of a hard steel dome strut, and achieve an improved curve acceleration with a gearbox with a better transmission ratio. However, you shouldn't stake on that in the case of high-speed roads like the motorway. For those, it's useful to apply an extra-light flywheel, as it provides better acceleration (though there is a loss of speed on steep inclines).

The more spare parts you have in your garage, the more chances you have to win the race, so don your overalls and become a grease monkey.




**BUILD IT YOURSELF** **The only way to consistently win races is to customize your car. Upgrades are the key to victory.**



**SNOWBLIND** At this section in the Alps, you can drive across this frozen water to save yourself some time. We hope you didn't choose slicks for this track.

### Futuristic ambience — the Industrial Zone

This is an almost straight night course that should be driven with slicks. There are many passages where you can drive at full throttle, but also a number of possibilities to reach the finish line. Don't forget to turn on your headlights!

### It's Formula 1 country— the Monte Carlo tracks

As many as five stages are to be mastered in Monaco, even if they are always the same tracks with small and insignificant changes, and different starting and finishing positions.

The city track is narrow, fast, and dimly lit. Switch on your lights (or bump up the gamma setting) and off you go. Caution: Drive up only the two ramps at the sides of the main street if you want to make up for lost time. If the road is free you should stick to it. There is only one suitable type of tires here: slicks!

### Slider's paradise — Côte d'Azure

Côte d'Azure is the ideal track on which to slide around corners. You can easily cope with the many bends by means of a nice slide. There is almost no need to use the brakes in many sections. When you enter the town, keep to the right side of the road and drive onto the planks of the port, because you don't have to fear any traffic here. Slicks are imperative.

### Crossing France on the way — Normandy

Turn right at the first junction and then right again at the industrial plant. Speeds of more than 150mph are no problem at all. By and large, you'll find this is an easy track.

### Over hill and dale — the Pyrenees

This track is also easy and plays into different styles. At the start you'll see an intersection. If you take a left turn, the route is longer but the track is also simpler. Turn right and you will encounter some difficult corners. Apart from that, drive this track flat out.

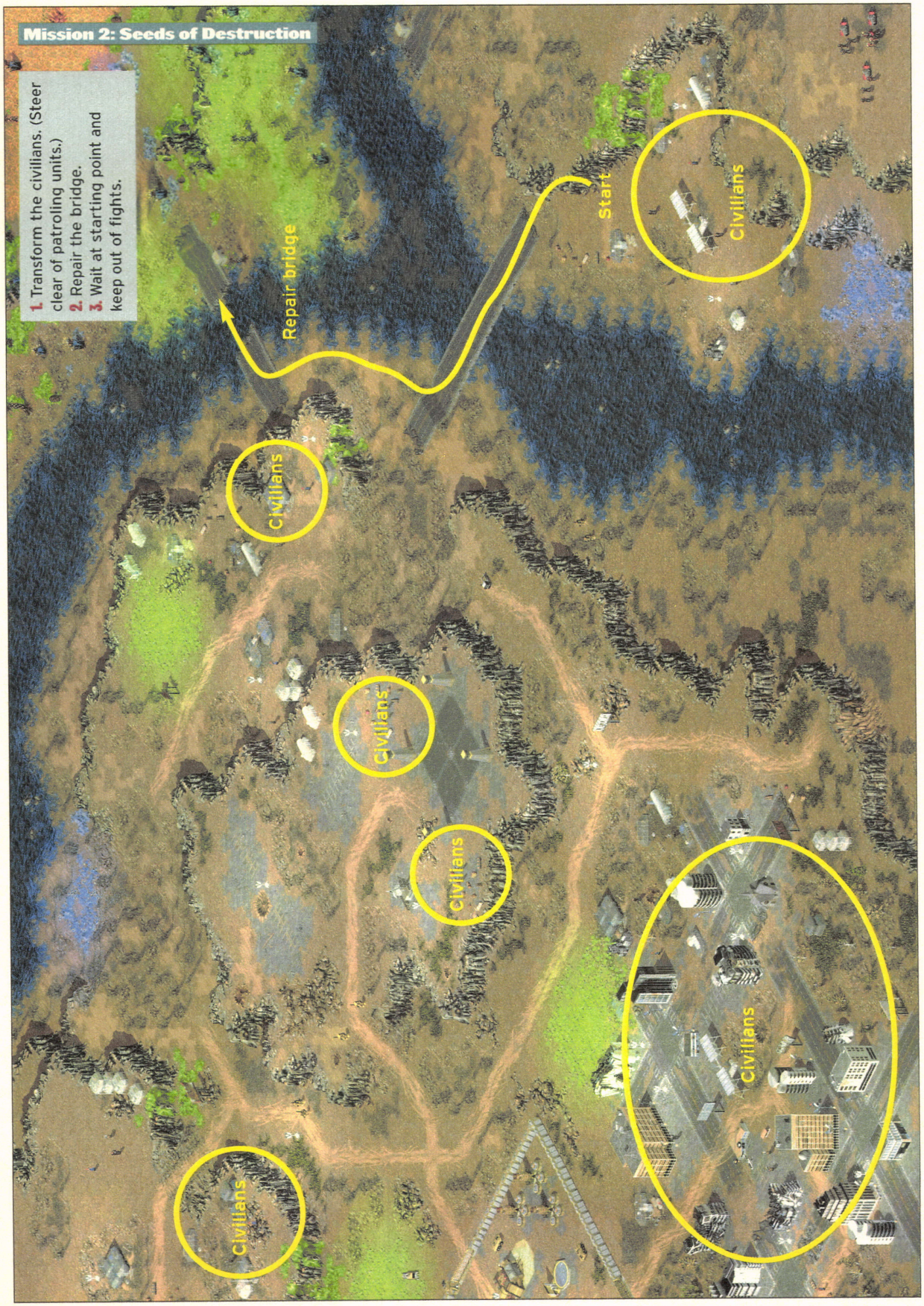


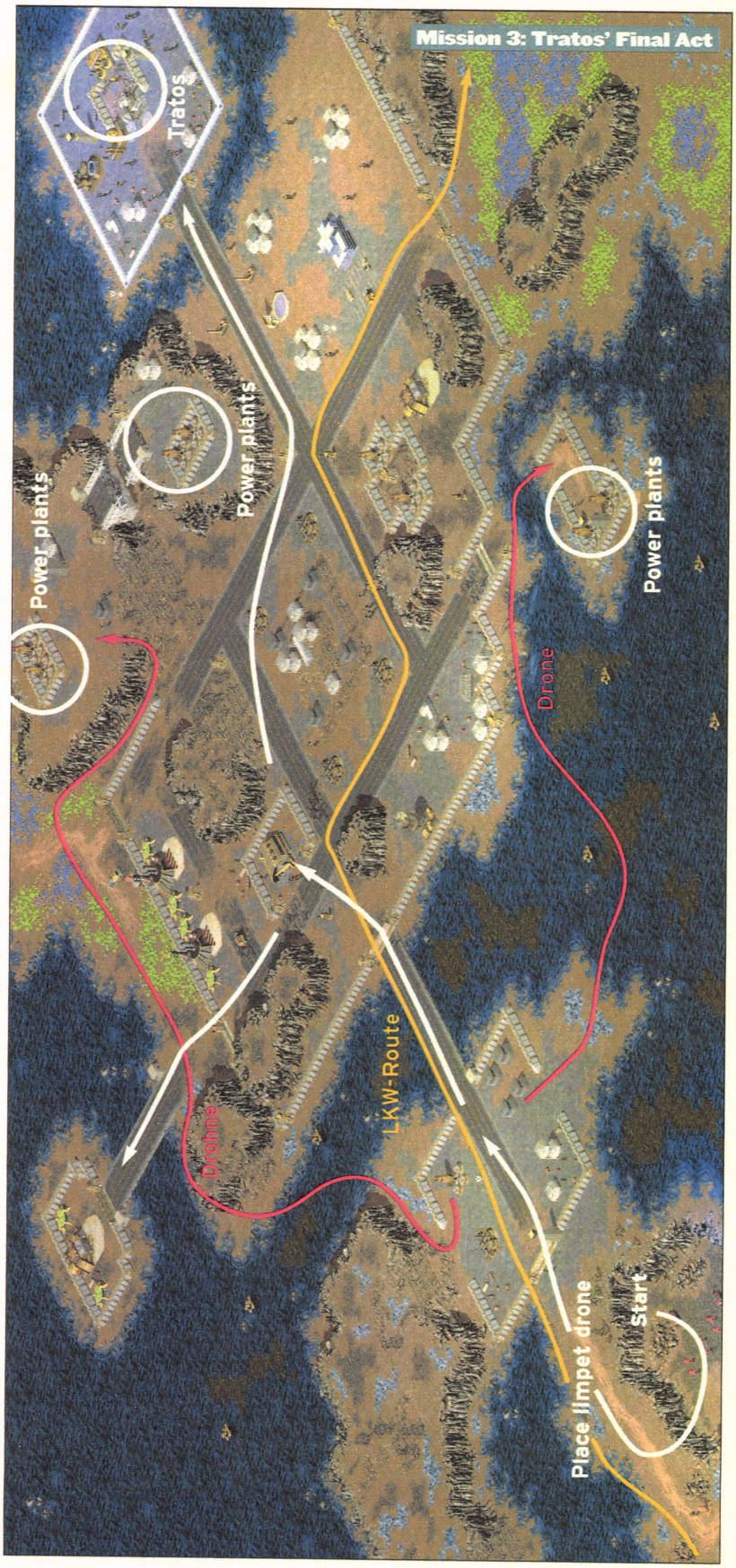
**THREAD THE NEEDLE** Pay attention to the tollgate on the motorway; it gets particularly narrow there. The tunnel following that is also extremely dicey, as it abruptly branches into sections.

# For Kane!

## Last month we showed you how to get through the GDI missions. This month we show you the way of the NOD warrior




Mission 2: Seeds of Destruction
1. Transform the civilians. (Steer clear of patroling units.)
2. Repair the bridge.
3. Wait at starting point and keep out of fights.
Repair bridge
Start
Civilians
Civilians
Civilians
Civilians
Civilians
Civilians



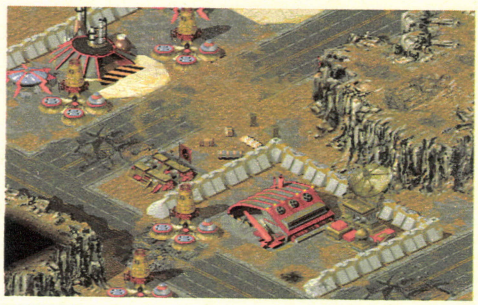

1. Destroy enemy units in front of the small base. Place a limpet drone on the street.
2. Take over the base and defend it.
3. Unearth the power plant with more limpet drones.
4. Take over the construction yard behind the bridge. Build your base here.
5. Advance with your forces to the northeast.




**PREPARATION** With the infantry gone, plant a limpet drone directly on the street.



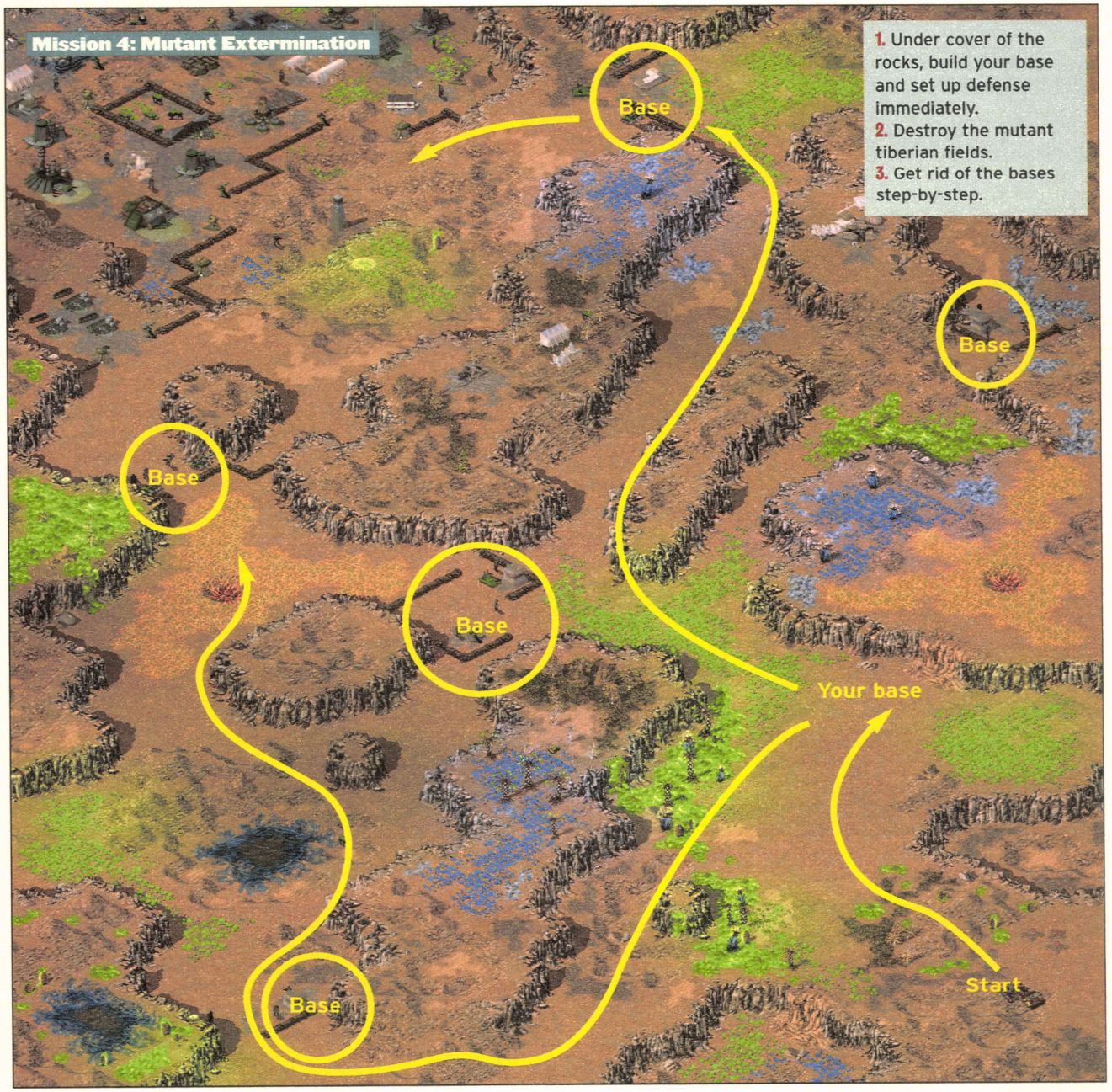
**LURED** With a small army-troop, lure more enemy units over the bridge.



**TAKEOVER** Now you can take the construction yard and the refinery unhindered.



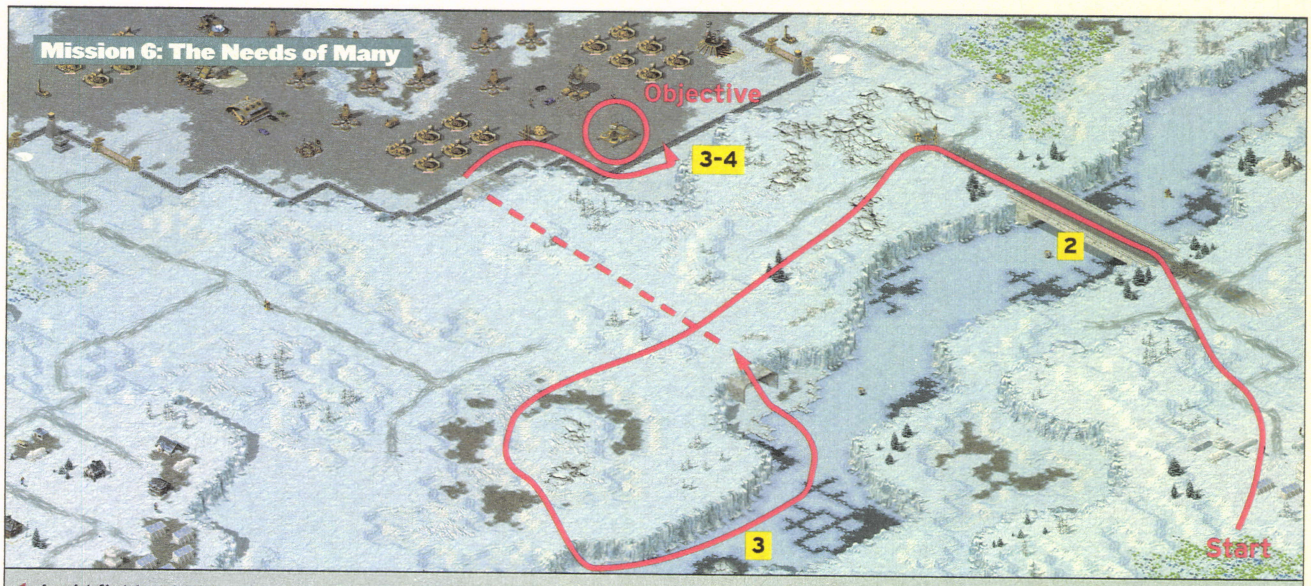

**ASSASSINATION** The searched victim hides in the northern base.



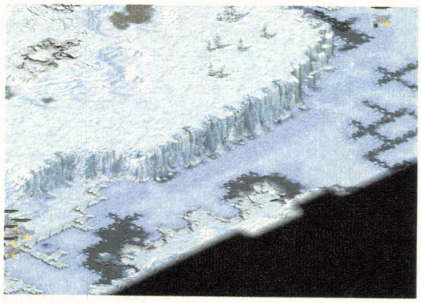




1. Together with reinforcements from the northern hill, make your way to the west. Be careful.
2. Avoid patrols.
3. Sneak from behind toward the airfield and repair the damaged building as quickly as possible.
4. Leave promptly.



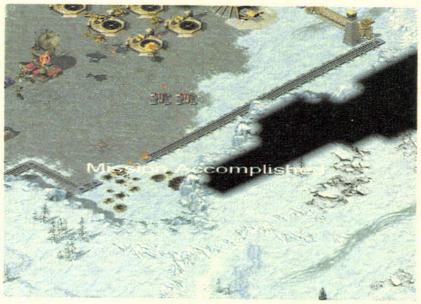

1. Avoid fights at all costs, and get out of the way of the patrolling units.
2. Send stealth tanks one by one over the frozen river.
3. Set up stealth tanks at the little bay.
4. Fire only one or two shots at the building at a time and then make your tanks invisible again.



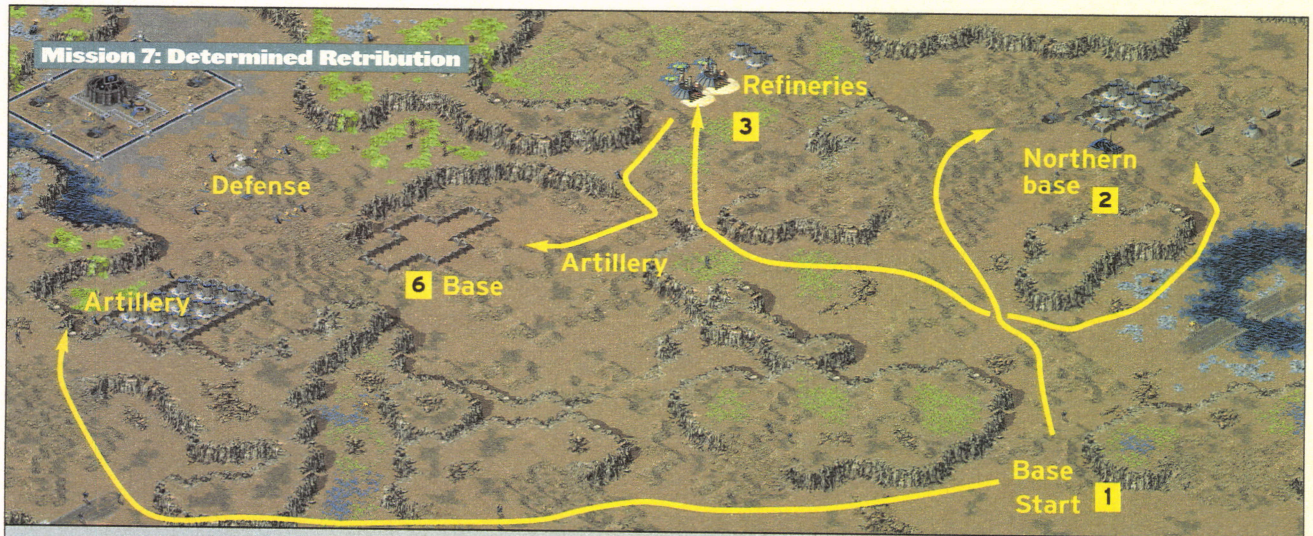
**THIN ICE** Pay attention to the fragile ice when moving with your stealth tanks to the other side.



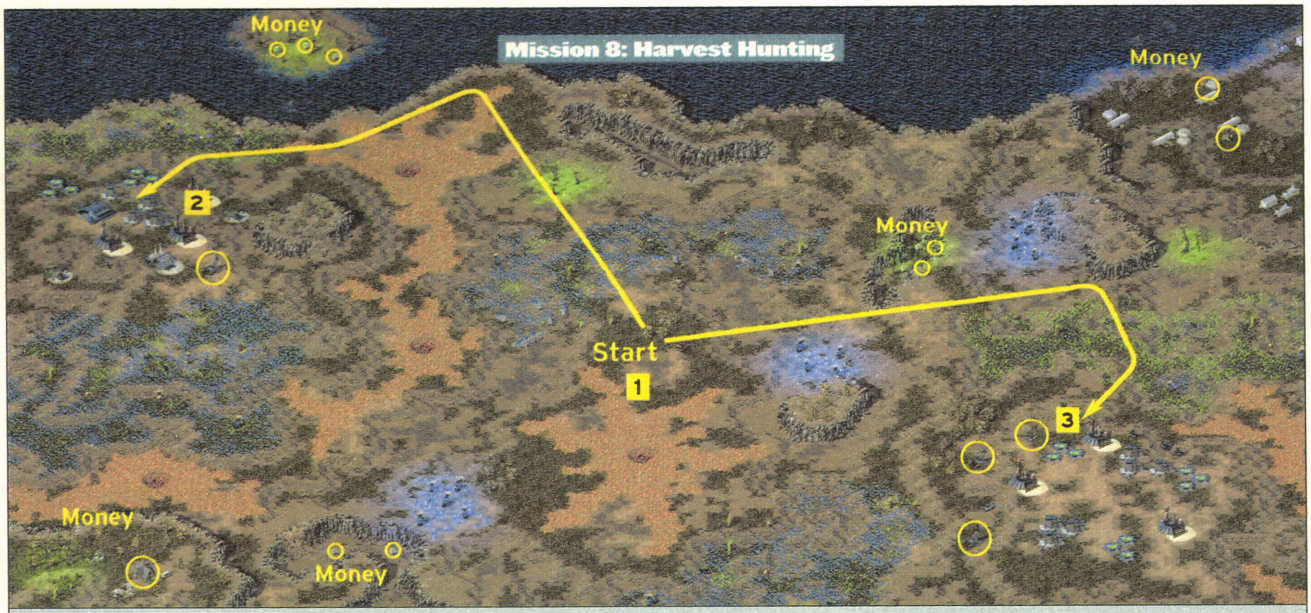
**UNNOTICED** At this point you can park your stealth tanks without alerting the enemy.



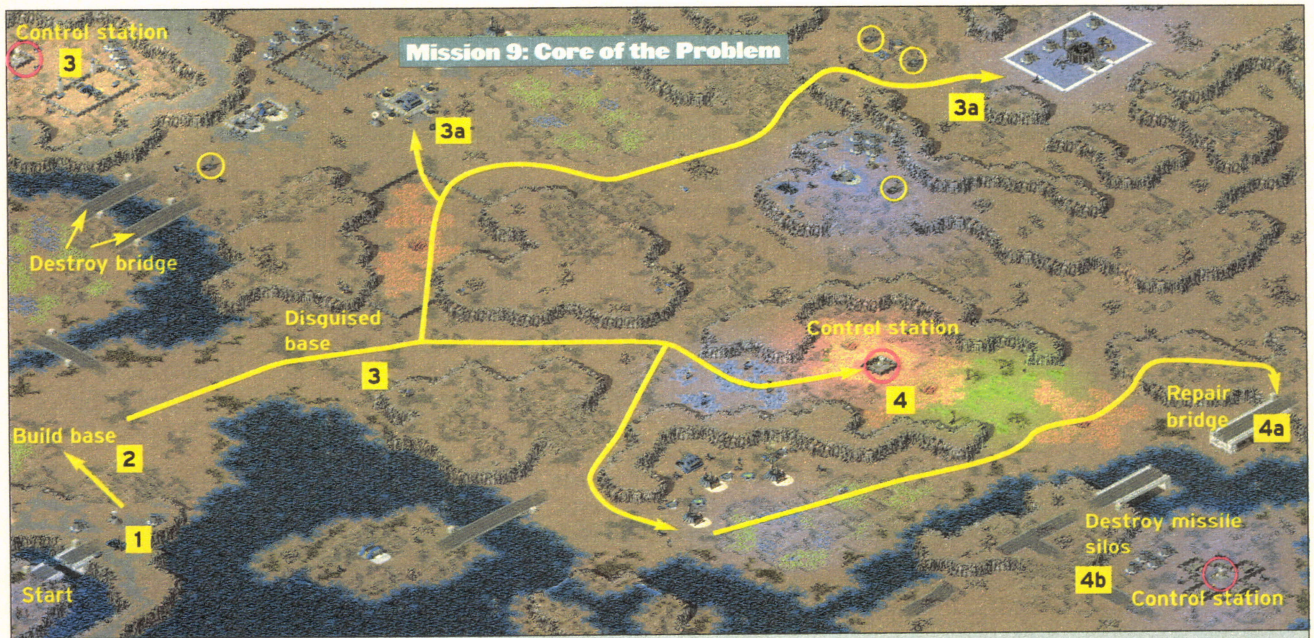
**DISTRACTION** Coordinate your attack on the building and takeover of the radar.



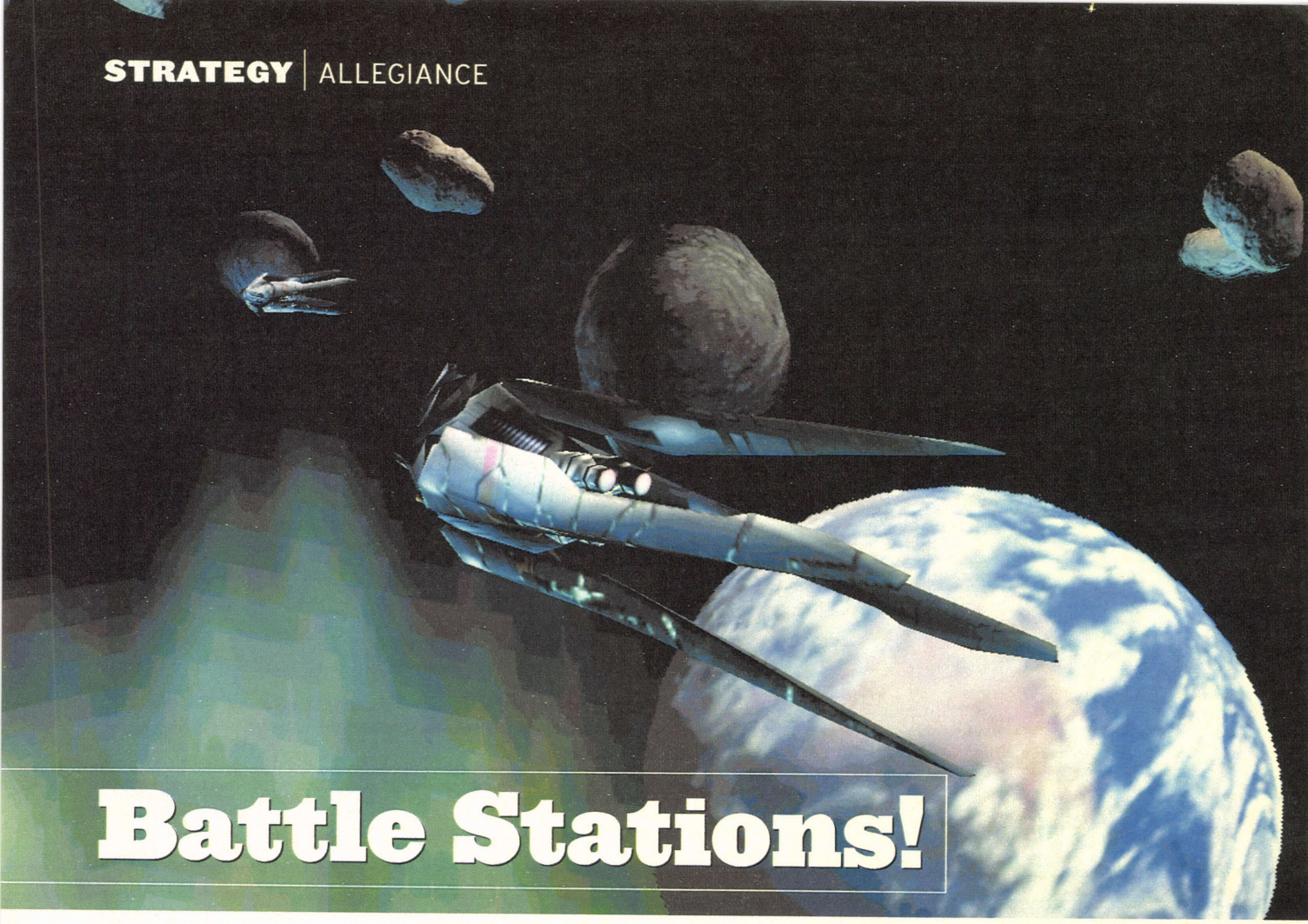

1. Build a base near the rocks and a strong defense to the north and west.
2. Attack the northern base.
3. Take over the refineries in the northwest and set up a second base there.
4. Put together two armies of artilleries.
5. Destroy the power plant to the west.
6. Call your forces together and send them to the main base.




1. Set up the mobile war factory at the starting point and build stealth tanks as well as devil's tongues. After a short while the village in the northeast will be attacked. Help the civilians.
2. The rebels will destroy the orange plants west of your war factory. Wait until the attackers retreat, then advance from the northern coast to the base. Destroy the construction yard first and then the rest.
3. Repair damaged units. Don't forget to produce a mobile sensor array, as the rebels' southeastern base is disguised with a stealth generator. Build as many stealth tanks and artilleries as possible. Destroy the trucks and collect money. Invade the base from the northeast to avoid the obelisks and laser turrets as long as possible. Cut off the energy for the defense facilities by destroying the power plants and destroy the rest of the base.



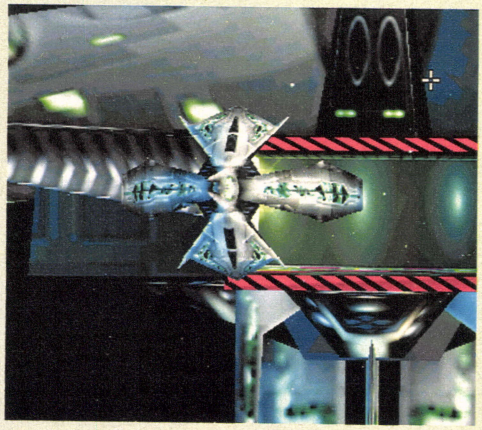

1. Try to beat back the hostile troops until the subterranean APC comes for reininforcement. Use the APC and the devil's tongues to easily take the outpost. Caution: Don't destroy the building; overtake it with engineers instead.
2. Set up a base with the mobile construction vehicle near the tiberian field to the north. Disguise it with a stealth generator. Two obelisks will keep away troops and tiberian life forms. (Surround the base with a wall.)
3. There is a disguised base to the east of your base. Take apart the juggernauts with harpies and immediately destroy the construction yard with stealth tanks. Work through to the north and to the east (3a).
4. Take over the three control stations with engineers. Repair the bridge to the southeast (4a). The missile silos are next to the control station in the southeast (4b). The faster you get to them, the faster you can stop the missile launches.



# Battle Stations!

## *Allegiance* brings epic battles to the multiplayer arena — and we help you survive

### SCOUT



**Pluses**
- Absolutely necessary for exploration and discovery
- Can carry probes and mines
- Great when used like a remote radar relay

**Minuses**
- Weak armor and shields
- Lacks afterburners
- Role decreases as game wears on

***Allegiance* is a game of strategy and space combat that requires hours of practice and in-depth knowledge of your equipment.**

**Unfortunately, the game provides little information in the sparse manual, so here are a few tips to help you along on your quest for galactic domination. Since most of you will start off as pilots rather than commanders, we'll focus on the ships.**

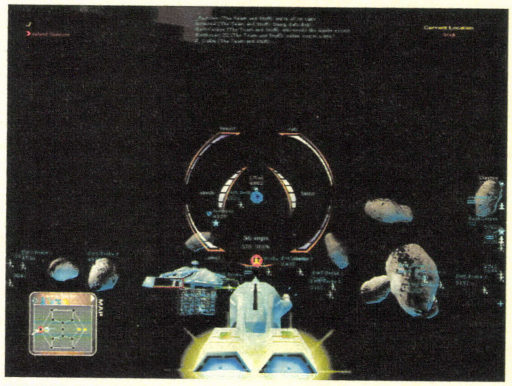
### Small Craft

The small craft in *Allegiance* consist of scouts, fighters, interceptors, and stealth fighters. As soon as the appropriate technology is obtained, all of these ships are available for free, making them the workhorses of most games. Generally maneuverable and fast, small craft serve in multiple roles – both on offense and defense.

### SCOUTS

The scouts are the eyes and ears of any squadron in *Allegiance,* and without them, victory is impossible.

The scout's first task in any game is exploration. It should load up with EWS probes and search unexplored map areas for aleph points to other sectors and special asteroids for mining and construction. You should pick up the



**SENSOR NET** **You'll need a heavy layer of probes for defense if the enemy has stealth capabilities.**



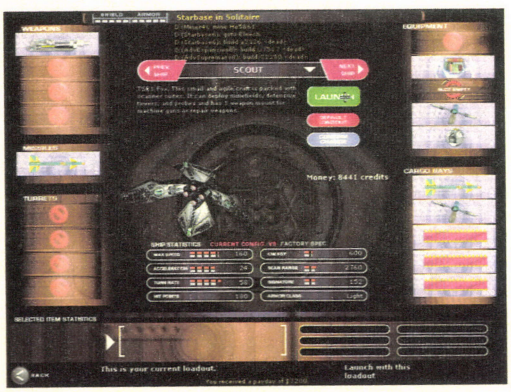

**ARE WE THERE YET?** Pick up ejected buddies as soon as possible. Otherwise they'll have a long ride home before they can get back into the action.

occasional cash power-up lying around in the sectors. Put the EWS probes in your inventory to good use. Since you can't be in every sector all the time, these radarlike probes provide a good early-warning system for your team against enemy incursions. Early detection of an enemy thrust can give you the valuable minutes needed to put up a coherent defense.

Scouts should generally avoid combat due to their abysmal armament and lack of afterburners. Not only would it be difficult to actually kill the enemy, but you would waste valuable time chasing your opponents rather than checking out unexplored areas.

After the initial phase of the game, the scout's role decreases but doesn't disappear. It should always put down more layers of probes for better information, scouting, or escorting and repairing friendly capital ships with nanite guns. One of the few ships that can carry mines, the scout is also useful in mining aleph points against incoming enemies.

The agility and speed of scouts also make them ideal for harassment duty. A couple of good scout pilots can draw and keep the attention of many enemy fighters simply by flying around in enemy sectors and luring the other team into a game of tag. A useful tactic in this situation is to stuff your hull full of mines. Dropping the mines on the fighters pursuing you will damage them severely and often even destroy the enemy, leaving a bunch of them floating around in pods.

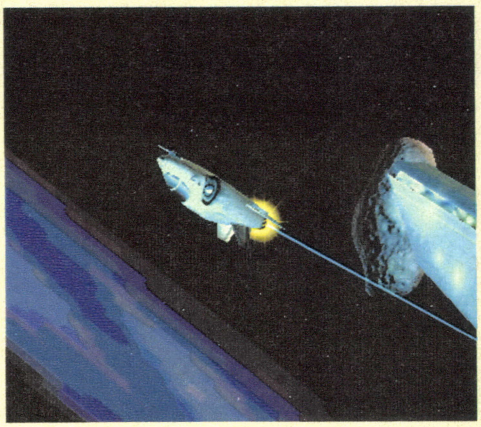



**SHOPPING SPREE** Make sure your load-out works with your current situation. The default load-out is often useless.

### INTERCEPTORS

Interceptors are the kings of dogfights. With a large amount of afterburner fuel, devastating weapons, and agile turning abilities, they are very useful for defense. Their low-signature

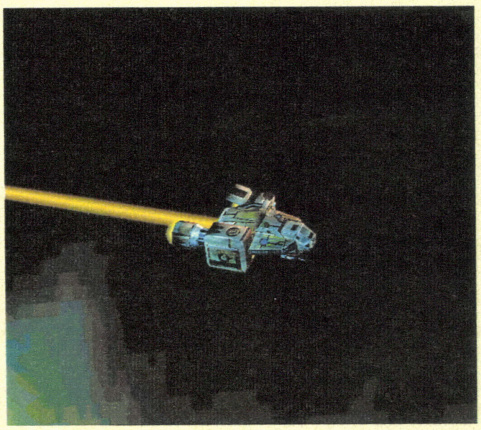
## INTERCEPTOR



**Pluses**
- Nothing is better in a dogfight
- Very agile
- Low-signature emissions make them hard to spot

**Minuses**
- No missiles
- You can't ripcord out
- Weapons have very limited range

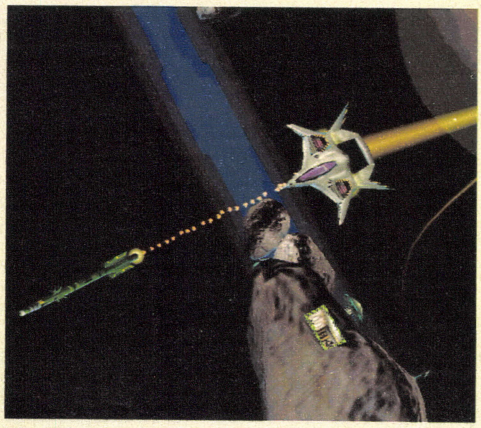
## FIGHTER



**Pluses**
- You can ripcord out for quick exits
- Great for short- and medium-range fighting
- Missiles pack a wallop

**Minuses**
- Weak armor
- Not as powerful as Interceptor
- Best when used in numbers

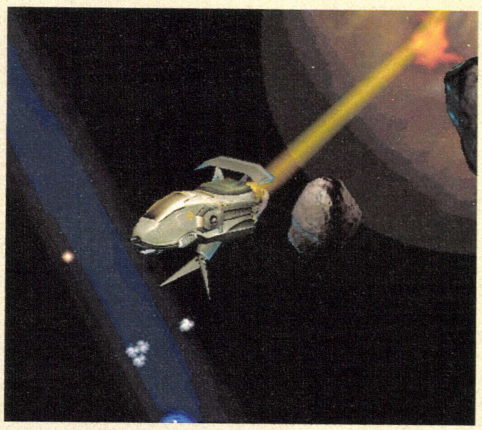
## STEALTH FIGHTER



**Pluses**
- Cloaking ability is great for surprise attacks
- Good when used to harass the enemy
- Great for killing civilian targets

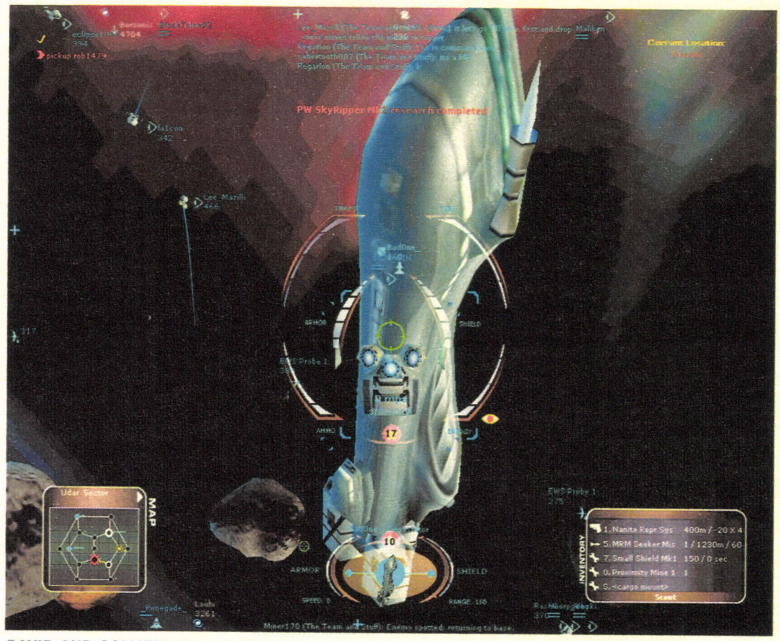
**Minuses**
- Weak armor
- When not cloaked, it's easily killed
- Less effective against enemy armor

## BOMBER



**Pluses**
- Very inexpensive
- Used to destroy enemy bases
- Can pound the enemy into oblivion

**Minuses**
- Slow
- Pilots are vulnerable to attack
- Needs fighter escorts



**DAVID AND GOLIATH** **Though fighters are puny compared with capital ships, if you use swarms of them to attack, the behemoth is toast.**

emissions make them difficult for the enemy to spot, allowing them to be ideal for ambushing enemies, especially if you have a scout or EWS probes to make up for your own shortcomings in scanning ability.

On the downside, interceptors lack range. Once their afterburner fuel runs out, they're much slower than a fighter or a scout, and are sitting ducks if the enemy refuses to close into dogfighting range. Lacking the ability to ripcord (teleport), these ships have a difficult time responding to emergencies in another system, as they'll have to fly there the old-fashioned way.

During combat the interceptor pilot should try to stick as close to the enemy as possible, as the range of the interceptor's guns are quite low and it usually lacks missiles. Liberally use the lateral thrusts to strafe the enemy, and then employ your afterburners to extricate yourself from any unpleasant situations.

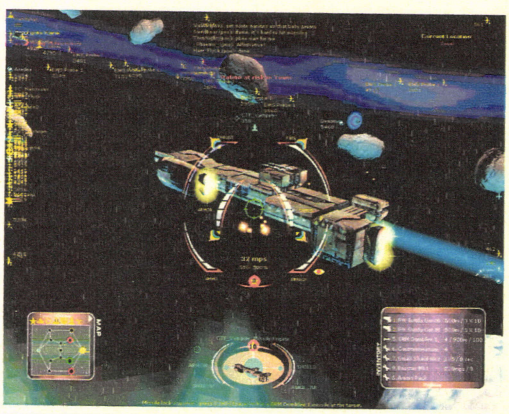
### FIGHTERS

The fighter isn't as powerful as the interceptor, but it has a longer range. With the ability to ripcord, decent scanners, and good firepower, they are ideal for escort missions or miner defense in faraway sectors. If emergencies arise in your rear guard, you can easily get back.

During combat these ships perform well in both medium and short ranges. However, the fighter's inventory of missiles and guns is still no match for the interceptor's firepower, so if you ever end up in a fight with one of those, try to stay out of its range and empty your missile racks at the enemy.

### STEALTH FIGHTERS

The submarines of an *Allegiance* fleet, stealth fighters have the ability to cloak and avoid enemy detection.



**AT ALL COSTS** **If your home base is under attack, destroy the enemies no matter what, even if you have to ram them.**

Ideal for interdiction and harassment, they can be deadly. Though fragile and equipped with fewer weapons than normal fighters, stealth fighters can usually avoid being targeted as long as you don't use your own weapons or afterburners.

Often outfitted with guns specializing in the destruction of enemy civilian craft, stealth fighters can wreck enemy economies by hunting down enemy miners and constructors. Nearly invisible unless they're right next to an enemy, these ships are also good for scouting out enemy territory. Use stealth fighters to destroy all enemy probes on your paths of approach, forcing the enemy to spread itself thin in order to locate your attack fleet.



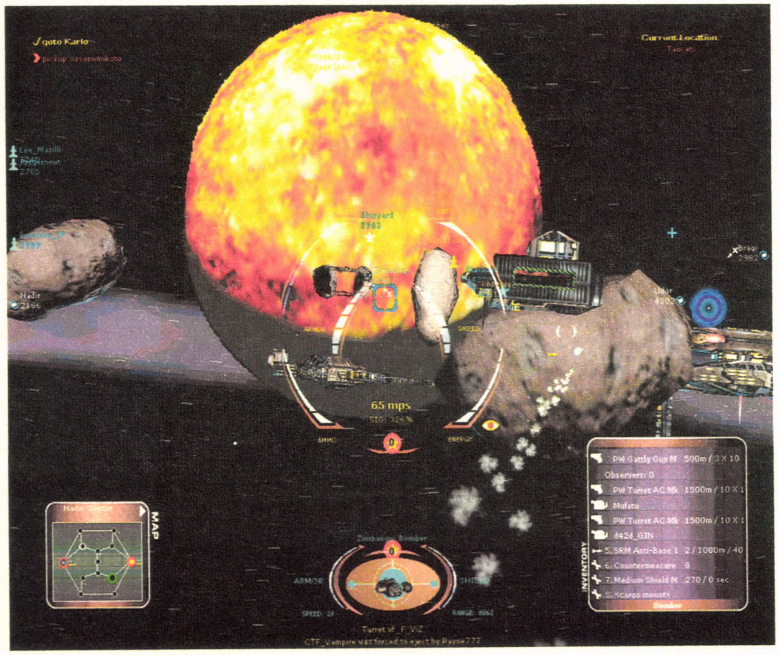
**FIRE DISCIPLINE** When you're manning a turret, fire only when necessary. Wasting ammo can doom your ship.

## The Big Boys

### BOMBERS/ STEALTH BOMBERS

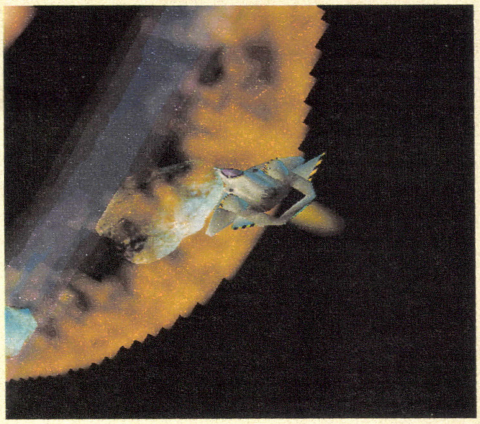
Inexpensive but slow as a turtle, these ships can carry up to two turret gunners and are useful for destroying lightly defended enemy bases. Due to their ships' lack of speed and generally weak turrets, the bomber pilot should be ready to ripcord out of the ship at the first sign of trouble. On any attack, bombers should have a decent escort, or you should at least be certain the enemy sector is lightly defended. Once in, fly straight for the enemy base and launch your missiles as quickly as possible. Since a bomber doesn't have much armor, an enemy fighter or two can tear one to pieces within a matter of seconds.

The stealth bomber should be used with even more care. Turret gunners on these ships are probably useless, as their weak armor means you're almost as good as dead if enemy defenders find you. When going on the attack, try to have your scouts and stealth fighters clear out enemy probes to leave you a clear avenue of




**RIPE FOR THE PICKING** With only slow capital ships for support, this base falls easily to a surprise attack. Make sure you always protect your bases with fighters.

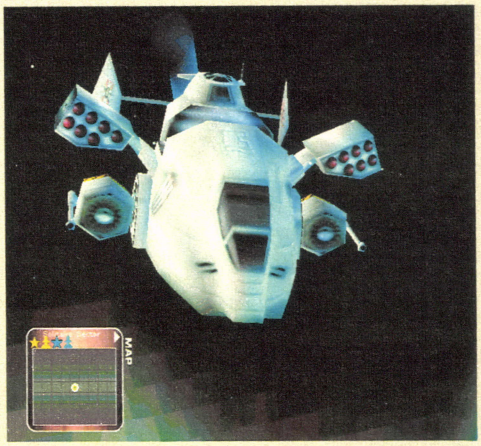
## STEALTH BOMBER



**Pluses**
- Inexpensive
- Stealth mode lets you launch surprise attacks
- Frees up escort fighters for other duties

**Minuses**
- Turrets are very weak
- Doesn't take too much damage before biting it
- Can't outrun enemy small craft

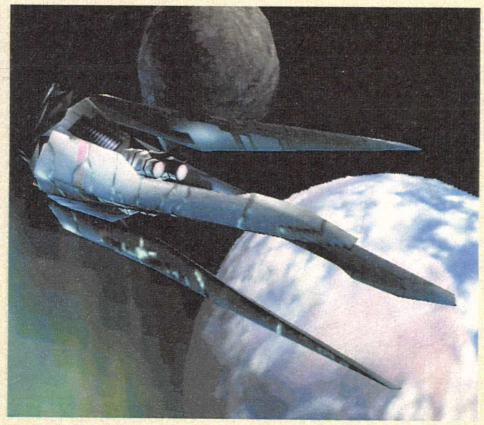
## GUNSHIP




**Pluses**
- Has megafirepower – not to be trifled with
- Inexpensive
- Can be devastating when used in groups

**Minuses**
- Ultraslow
- Useful only for defense
- Requires turret gunners to be effective

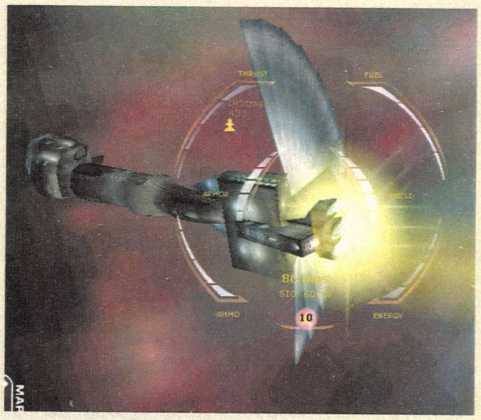
## DEVASTATOR



**Pluses**
- Lots of heavy firepower
- Plenty of armor
- Can overpower most other vessels

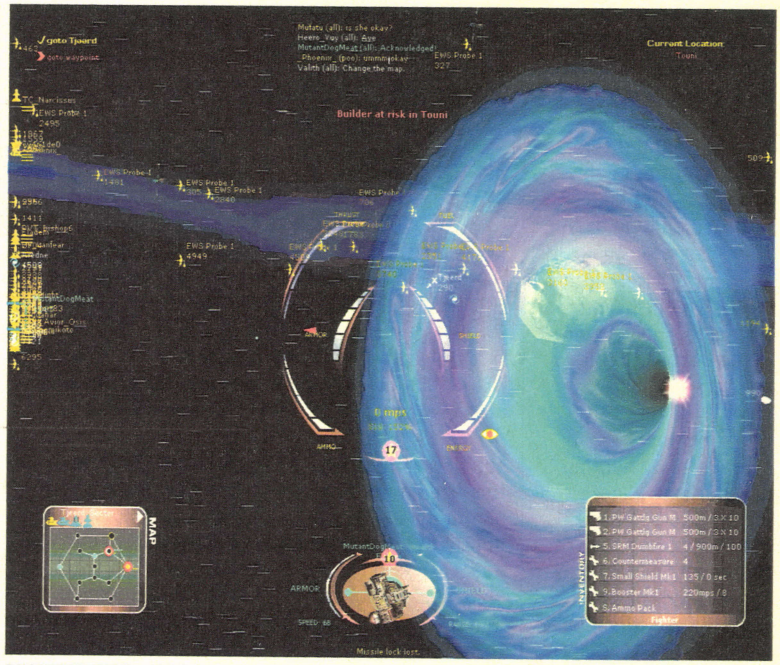
**Minuses**
- Expensive to produce
- Requires turret gunners to be effective against small craft
- Slow and lumbering

## CRUISER



**Pluses**
- Great multi-role ship
- Powerful armaments
- Lots of armor

**Minuses**
- Requires a lot of research to build
- Needs escorts to defend it from enemy fighters
- Very expensive



**BUSHWHACKING** Waiting outside an aleph is a great way to ambush incoming enemy capital ships. Surprise is often your most powerful ally.

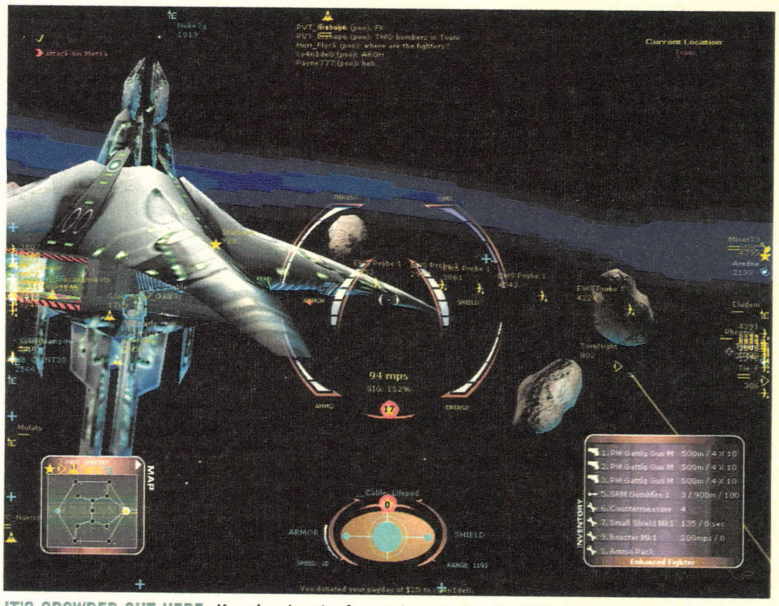
approach. Sneak in, then launch the missiles as quickly as possible.

### CAPITAL SHIPS

These behemoths of space are used for a variety of specialized tasks. Though they require a large amount of resources to build, they are immensely powerful and very tough, and are able to withstand and deal out a massive amount of punishment.

Capital ships can be divided into two categories: antiship and antibase. The gunship, destroyer, and devastator crafts all fit into the antiship category. Armed with powerful guns or antiship missiles, these ships can easily tear up an enemy. They are slow, so make sure they have sufficient escort or turret gunners to ensure their survival.

The antibase ships include the troop

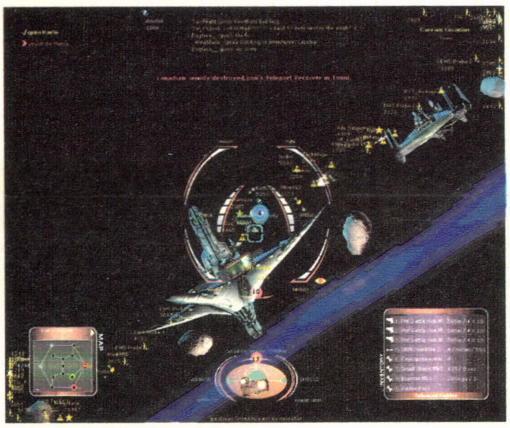


**IT'S CROWDED OUT HERE** Keeping track of your teammates is difficult when space is chock-full of combatants. Check twice before you blast somebody if friendly fire is turned on.

transport, missile frigate, and cruiser. Though both the cruiser and frigate have powerful guns, their armament of missiles can destroy the largest enemy base. The transport is unique in that it can take over enemy bases even though it is entirely unarmed. As with other capital ships, antibase ships require a good escort and intelligence to be successful. Even the gargantuan cruisers would eventually fall, given a large enough swarm of enemies. Always remember to scout out enemy sectors before going on the attack.

### Good Luck and Good Hunting

It will take many missions to learn and master the game, but with a sense of team play, good communications with your squad, and good wingmen, victory is within your reach.

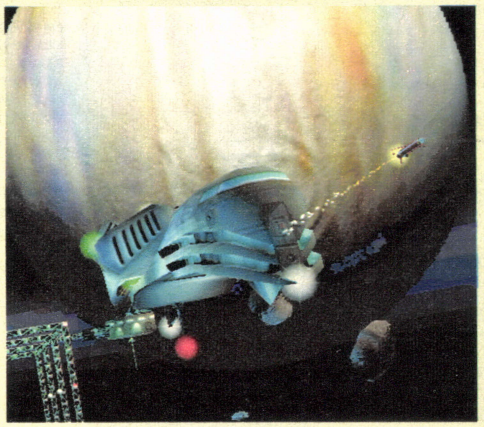


**FLANKING MANEUVER** Using proper military tactics is key in *Allegiance*. Attacking an enemy's flanks works quite well.



**STRAFE FOR YOUR LIFE** Use afterburners and lateral thrusts to avoid incoming fire – or pay the consequences.

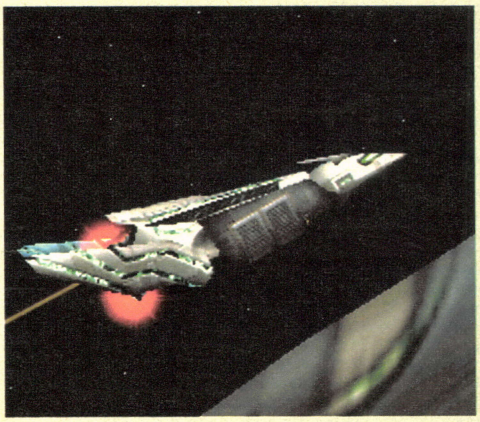
## MISSILE FRIGATE



**Pluses**
- Powerful weapons
- Can destroy an enemy base all by itself
- Lots of armor

**Minuses**
- Very, very slow
- Needs lots of escort protection
- Susceptible to ambush

## TROOP TRANSPORT

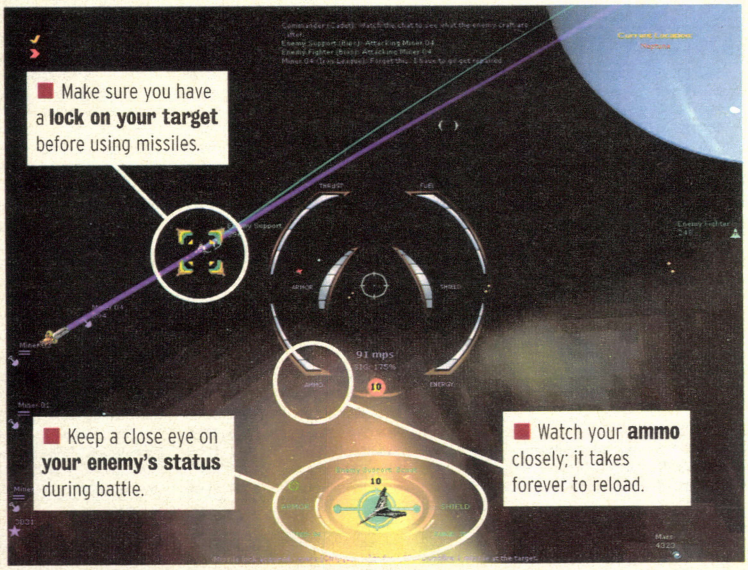


**Pluses**
- Used to take over enemy bases
- Lots of armor
- Great antibase ship

**Minuses**
- Very slow-moving
- Needs escorts to protect it
- Doesn't have any firepower of its own

■ A CLOSER LOOK

## KILLING SCHOOL



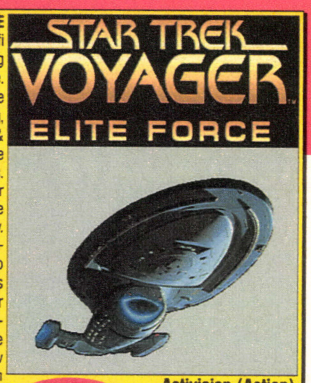
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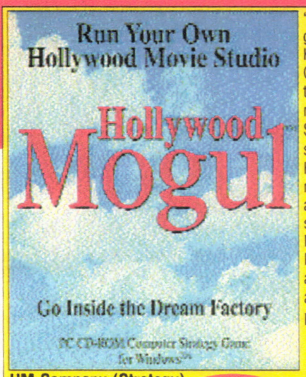
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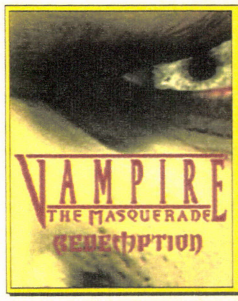



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**Blizzard (Roleplaying)**
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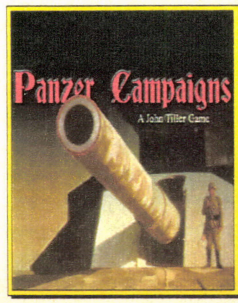
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**Activision (Roleplaying)**
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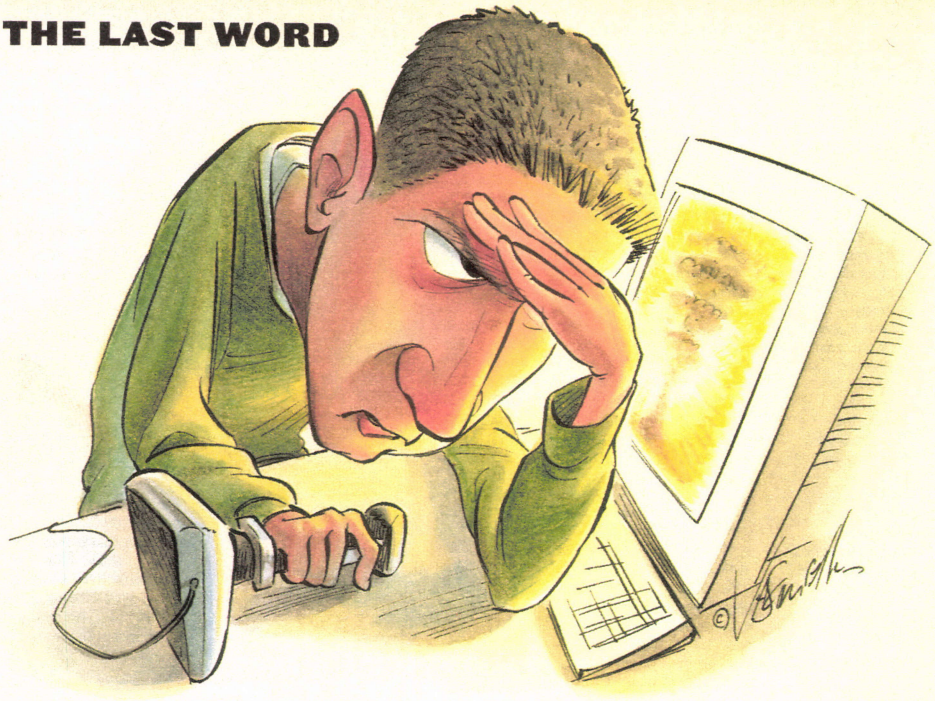
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# Confessions of a LOSER

## If you're constantly losing at games, cheer up: You're not as hopeless and pitiful as this guy

**BY TALMADGE WARD**

Like a fat girl writing for *Shape* magazine, I'm living a lie. I used to walk amongst my friends pretending to be a master at video games. I'd brag and talk smack, threatening to open that can of whoop ass on all those who opposed me. The sad fact remains, though: I really suck. So here I am, clearing my conscience and telling the world that yes, I'm a gaming loser. If you're a gaming loser like me, then I hope my catharsis helps you too.

It all started about 10 years ago. I was an arcade troll and would dump an average of $25 per week on *Street Fighter II*. What can I say? It was *the* hot game at the time, and I loved the way crowds of kids would gather around me when I played. Nobody could beat me. I'd walk in with that dorky swagger of someone whose greatest accomplishment was finishing the game on one quarter without getting hit. Then it all came to a screeching halt.

One day I was busy practicing my triple-roundhouse-dragon-punch move when some little kid walked up to the machine with a single quarter and dirt on his face. He asked if he could play, and I said sure, figuring he wanted a lesson from the master. His little finger pushed the coin into the slot, and he reached up to grab the controls. For God's sake, he could barely see over his hands to see the screen!

All of a sudden – SMACK! I was out in the first round. I looked down at him but he just stared blankly into the screen like he was in some kind of trance.

Round 2. Down. Round 3. Down again. Round 4, round 5, round 6. I ran out of quarters while he still played on his first one! The little bastard had beaten me soundly and didn't even so much as snicker at me. He just kept looking at the screen silently – and that made it even worse! I never played again.

**First I'm humiliated in person; next I'm thrashed online.**

For weeks I walked alone in a daze, wondering about what had happened. I tortured myself relentlessly by passing by the arcade without going in. Though I still had a passion for gaming, I couldn't face my friends in the arcade ever again.

In my first job out of college, I heard about *Doom II* and installed it on my work computer. At first it was harmless: run around and blow away demons on Mars on my lunch hour. A co-worker, we'll call her Debra, saw me and asked what I was doing. After I showed her the game, she asked for a copy. Suddenly everybody in the office was playing – including meek Debra, who fragged me daily without remorse. I could once again see that kid's emotionless stare back at the arcade. No way someone was going to get the best of me again, dammit! So I practiced for hours on end... until the boss caught me. By the end of that day I was about to start my next game: *Government Cheese Invaders.*

First I'm humiliated in person; next I'm thrashed online. Then I reverted to playing games by myself against the computer. Still, I couldn't even beat the damn thing at its own game! Pick a category, and my ass would be kicked: sports games, driving games, strategy games... hell, if I could lose at emails, I would.

So here I am, at my wit's end and unable to even look at a PC without cringing. I haven't left my bed in two days, haven't shaved or showered in twice that time, am buried in Big Mac wrappers, and am torn between rereading Kurt Vonnegut's *Breakfast of Champions* or watching reruns of *Saved by the Bell.* Will I find comfort in the arms of Screech's often wacky hijinks? I sure hope so.... 



### ON THE WEB!

Millions of people worldwide suffer from being game losers. And many of them succeed at cutting their own hands off. Don't suffer the same fate! Go to **www.incite.com** and check out the "Loser's Guide to Gaming" online.

ILLUSTRATION BY DANIEL VASCONCELLOS

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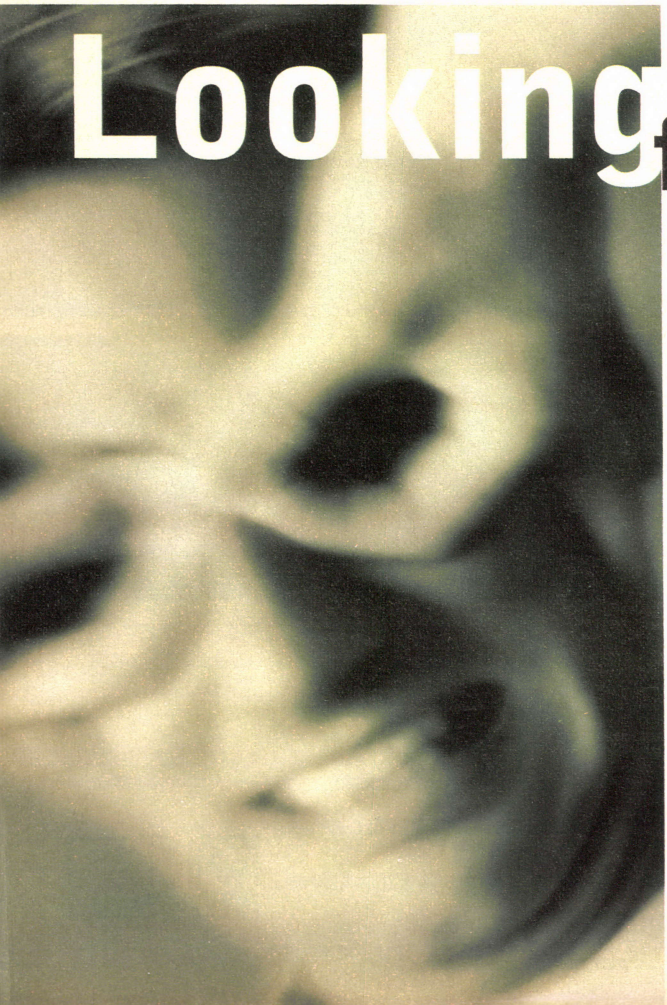

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